

U.S. asks allies to send more troops, weapons to Gulf

BRUSSELS (R) — The United States said Friday it had asked its NATO allies to send more troops and weapons to the Gulf, but added it could force Iraqi troops out of Kuwait by the force already there or on their way.

Defence Secretary Dick Cheney told a news conference he had not made "specific requests to specific allies" at a two-day NATO meeting which was called to discuss a new post-cold war strategy but was overshadowed by the Gulf crisis.

But he confirmed reports that he had told NATO members additional air defence units, artillery and ground troops would be welcome, as well as medical supplies and transport for U.S. reinforcements.

"The response was generally favourable," Cheney said, adding that he had received no specific promises.

"While we are happy to have contributions, we are not dependent on these in terms of getting the job done," he said.

The United States, leading the military coalition confronting Iraq, has more than 240,000 troops in the region and plans to boost this to 400,000 by Jan. 15 — the U.N.-imposed deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait.

Cheney said he had no plans to increase those numbers further. He said he hoped any additional forces would be self-sustaining and integrated within the U.S.-dominated command structure in the region.

Britain and France are the only U.S. allies to have sent ground forces to Saudi Arabia although others have contributed ships, planes, money or transport.

There has been repeated criticism in Washington that European allies have not done enough to support the military buildup. The United States asked for more troops from NATO members in September.

Asked when he would like to see additional forces sent, Cheney replied: "The sooner the better."

NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner told reporters he was satisfied with the solidarity displayed by the alliance over the crisis but added: "I can only encourage our member nations where possible... to increase their contributions."

NATO cannot take collective military action outside the territory of its 16 member nations, so any contributions must be made by individual countries.

The issue of whether NATO's role should be expanded outside its members' territory is a highly controversial one within the alliance, and Woerner said he did not expect discussion on it until the Gulf crisis is resolved.

The NATO defence ministers, in a statement at the end of their meeting, said they still hoped the crisis could be resolved peacefully.

"The Gulf crisis has demonstrated once again the continuing risk of aggression," they said.



Two Iraqi mothers with their sick children at an Iraqi hospital. Most hospitals in Iraq are working on an emergency basis as a result of acute medicine shortages, according to an American delegation (photo by Norbert Schiller).

Americans report acute medicine shortage in Iraq

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Most Iraqi hospitals are working on an "emergency basis" as a result of an acute shortage of medicine, and Iraqi children are the hardest hit, according to an American delegation which paid a visit to Baghdad last week.

"A ban on importation of medicine for children is an unjust embargo," said Scott Kennedy, who flew to Amman from Baghdad Thursday after a 10-day stay in Iraq, where the group delivered medicine and relief supplies collected by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR).

"We have no qualms in saying to our fellow American people that it is perfectly appropriate for peace activists and those who are concerned with justice, as a humanitarian gesture, to bring supplies for the children in Iraq," Kennedy told reporters at Amman airport.

Kennedy was referring to the international trade embargo imposed against Iraq following its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

In theory, food and medicine are exempt from the ban, but difficulties involved in getting the supplies to Iraq have been cited by international relief officials as one of the main problems confronting the Iraqis.

Shelly Douglas, another member of the Nyack, New York-based FOR, said the Iraqis "are having to close down hospitals because they don't have the personnel and medicine to treat children."

"It is really a sad situation," she added.

Asked whether the delegation's findings could have been the result of stage-managed efforts by the Iraqis, Douglas said:

"We have heard and seen enough of other experiences that we think it is true. It is definitely hurting people, especially children."

George Williams corroborated it by adding that the delegation members had also spoken to "several medical doctors, not Iraqi nationals but of European countries and the United States, and they said hospitals remained closed and most of them were working on emergency basis."

"This is happening throughout the country," Williams said.

"We also spoke to (religious) ministers and congregations and they all confirmed that they have an acute shortage of medicine," he added.

According to Dennis Marker, another member of the delegation, many children are also suffering from malnutrition. "I saw several cases of definite malnutrition," he said.

"We saw many incubators which were not working because they did not have incubator lines or their burners have given out," Marker said. "Those which are working now cannot be repaired if they get damaged since there are no spare parts."

Iraqi officials have said that over 1,400 children had died because of shortage of medical supplies.

Douglas said the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which describes itself as totally secular organisation devoted to the cause of peace, will continue its efforts within the United States and outside to raise more awareness of the actual situation in Iraq and the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

"There will be further delegations from FOR that will be going in (to Iraq)," she said. The team which returned to Amman Thursday was the second, FOR, delegation to Iraq.

Kennedy said the organisation "could not really raise enough medicine to meet the demands of the Iraqis." "It is largely symbolic," he said referring to the half a million dollar supply of medicine the group had already delivered to Iraq.

"Obviously the answer to the problem is a peaceful negotiated solution," Williams said.

U.S. lawmakers send mixed signals over Gulf

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The administration's Gulf policy has received support from influential Democrat Stephen Solarz, who commented that "sanctions offer us little hope" of convincing Iraq to withdraw army from Kuwait.

Solarz, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, made the comment while receiving testimony from Secretary of State James Baker. The secretary and other administration officials have suggested that military force may be necessary to compel Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait because economic sanctions alone may be insufficient to achieve the goal.

Solarz agreed it must be made clear that "unless (Iraq) withdraws, a war will be inevitable; and unless (it) withdraws, (it) and (its) military machine will be destroyed."

In contrast, some Senate Democrats are forcefully arguing in favour of giving the sanctions more time to bring pressure on Iraq and weaken its army.

At Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Paul Simon said there is "overwhelming" evidence that the sanctions are working, and Christopher Dodd warned that if the West gives up on them before seeing whether they can be made to work, it will lose useful tool in future conflicts.

Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell said the United States needs "a few more months" to see if sanctions will work.

During Baker's Wednesday appearance before the same panel, Democratic senators challenged his assertion that only a credible threat of imminent war can convince President Saddam Hussein to peacefully withdraw from the neighbouring country.

Sen. Paul Sarbanes took issue with the position of President Bush and Baker that by travelling to Baghdad to confer with Saddam Hussein, Baker will be "going the last mile" toward a peaceful solution of the Gulf crisis.

"I beg to disagree with you," Sarbanes said. "The last best chance for a peaceful solution, the going the last mile, is to sustain the sanctions policy for a period of time sufficiently long to give it a chance to work. There's no expert who has testified, or holds the view, that it could work within four months — none."

Sen. Joseph Biden said the administration has shifted to a

new policy "based on the premise that the sanctions will not work and that an early resort to offensive action may be necessary."

The senator reminded the secretary of his testimony to the foreign relations panel in September when Baker said: "What we ask most of the American people is to stand firm, be patient, and remain united."

Biden said there is "not one shred of evidence" from any source that Americans are losing their patience. He demanded to know which nations in the international coalition are wavering. Baker declined to identify any specific countries, but he insisted that those who have committed ground troops to the multinational force are prepared to fight alongside the United States.

Baker responded to the senator's criticism by pointing out that "if the sanctions are to succeed, they must do more than hurt Iraq economically. They must hurt Saddam so much that he changes his behaviour and withdraws from Kuwait." He said after four months of total embargo "all available evidence suggests" that the sanctions "have had little if any effect on his inclination to withdraw."

Former Assistant Secretary of Defence Richard Perle told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he thinks it is quite possible that war with Iraq is coming — and that U.S. policy should be to destroy (Iraq).

He also warned that an American defeat in the Gulf, even a perceived defeat by inaction, would "devastate American strength and authority" as a new world order is being fashioned in a post-totalitarian world.

Perle warned that if Saddam Hussein is allowed to remain in power, he could potentially "manipulate markets in a monopolistic fashion" and "ascend to leadership of the Arab masses" by compelling the "weak Gulf states to do his bidding."

Perle also stated that Saddam's survival would lead to Iraqi possession of nuclear weapons and eventually "another Arab-Israeli war." He warned that the anti-Iraq coalition is already beginning to fray, and said "I do not believe that time is on our side."

The United States should give the economic sanctions against Iraq more time to work and use a military option as a last resort. U.S. religious leaders told the Senate panel.

Top judge says no prisoners of conscience in Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's top judge, responding to reports of human rights abuses, defended capital punishment Friday and said there were no prisoners of conscience in Iran.

"When a merchant of death (drug smuggler) who commits any crime for profit is punished... this is in the cause of human rights," Tehran Radio quoted Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi as telling Friday prayer worshippers in the Iranian capital.

Iranian leaders have reacted angrily to recent reports by Amnesty International and a U.N. Human Rights Commission envoy charging widespread rights violations, including thousands of executions.

The London-based Amnesty said Tuesday more than 5,000 people were executed in Iran over the past three years, half of them political prisoners picked by a secret "death commission" in 1988.

Iran announced the execution of some 1,000 people on drug charges in 1989 and more than 300 this year. Judicial officials acknowledged the execution of a number of dissidents in 1988 but gave no figures.

"Not one person is in jail for his thoughts and opinions, even if he has signed a letter," Yazdi said.

"The assertion that there are prisoners of conscience in Iran is a pure falsehood... but if someone acts against the system and interests of the country and the nation, he will be dealt with."

The Amnesty report referred to the case of 20 government critics, including several former ministers, who were arrested in June after they signed an open letter to President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani criticising absence of freedoms.

"They remain in prison where they are feared to be suffering torture and ill-treatment to force them to give televised confessions of involvement in counter-revolutionary activity," the report said.

The men, associates of former liberal Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, have not been tried yet.

Independents gain in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Independent candidates made a surprisingly strong showing as final results began coming in on Friday for Egyptian parliamentary elections boycotted by the main opposition groups.

The second round of voting on Thursday for 261 seats was marked by scattered violence in which five people were killed and at least 10 wounded.

Results of the first round on Nov. 29 and initial returns from the second round showed independents had so far gained 130 of the 444 elected seats, compared to 215 for the National Democratic Party (NDP) of President Hosni Mubarak.

The left-wing Unionist Progressive Party (UPP), the only opposition party to gain a place in the new parliament, won five. Another 88 seats had yet to be declared Friday and eight others

face a third run-off vote within 10 days.

The last parliament elected in 1987 contained an opposition of only just over 100.

Analysts said the strong showing of independents seemed to have restored some credibility to Mubarak's cautious democratisation moves since he came to power in 1981.

Many of the independents are passed-over NDP members who stood against official party candidates.

The results for the 261 seats re-contested on Thursday, carried by Egypt's Middle East News Agency, showed independents taking 92 seats, the NDP 69 and the UPP four.

The surge of independent candidates was made possible by a new election law adopted after the supreme court declared the old one unfairly discriminated

against them.

Political analysts said if independents voted as a bloc after parliament opens on Dec. 13 they could hold up the substantial amount of legislation that needs a two-thirds majority under Egyptian law.

But NDP Secretary-General Yousef Wali, in remarks published Friday in Al Akhbar newspaper, said many independents who were not already NDP members had agreed to join his party.

The strong performance of independents nonetheless indicated a miscalculation in the NDP's election strategy.

They added that the main loser may have been the opposition, whose boycott seemed to have backfired. The New Wafd Party, the socialist Labour Party, the Liberal Party and the influential Muslim Brotherhood refused to contest the elections.

Iraq confirms it will release all foreign nationals

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The government of Iraq has officially notified the United States it will release all foreign nationals held in Iraq and Kuwait, Secretary of State James Baker told the House Foreign Affairs Committee Thursday, but he cautioned "we do want to see it actually happen."

Baker announced at the conclusion of his testimony that the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs had officially notified U.S. Charge d'affaires Joseph Wilson of the Iraqi government's decision.

Earlier in his testimony, before he had received confirmation of the decision, Baker told the committee, "I think we should acknowledge that this is a welcome and significant development, but we do want to see it actually happen. As far as Americans are concerned, we are prepared to implement it immediately," he added. (The State Department later said it was making preparations to evacuate U.S. citizens from Iraq and Kuwait as soon as they are permitted to leave.)

"It does not lessen, nor should it lessen our determination that Iraq's aggression against Kuwait must be reversed by full implementation of all of the Security Council resolutions," Baker declared.

"I think that this is a sign that our strategy of diplomatic and military pressure is working," the secretary added. "It seems to me no coincidence that this announcement comes just one week — just one week — after the international community has authorised the use of force."

Baker appeared before the House committee to outline U.S. strategy to resolve the Gulf crisis.

During the secretary's appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Dec. 5, several senators demanded that sanctions be given more time to work before military action is taken. On Dec. 6, however, some representatives were more sympathetic to administration initiatives. One, William Broome, noted that the administration has taken "a very hard line" toward Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait last August.

"Judging from the news this morning, it sounds like you did the right thing."

Baker asserted that the success of sanctions should be measured "in terms of whether it will require him (Saddam Hussein) to leave Kuwait, not whether it imposes an economic sanctions alone will do it. And therefore we must have a credible alternative in terms of the option of force," he declared.

But he warned that "at some point delay carries a very high price for all of us," because Iraq is going to continue to fortify its positions and continue to develop its chemical and biological weapons capabilities."

He said the integrated approach of political, military, and economic measures must be maintained "because we're beginning to see, I think, some signs that it could possibly succeed peacefully."

In response to some House panel members who criticised President Bush's Nov. 8 decision to nearly double the number of American forces deployed in the Gulf, he said, "how can you credibly threaten the use of force if you don't have the assets in place to do the job?" This was not a policy change, he said, but was a continuation of the policy goals and approaches set out at the beginning of the crisis.

"You must combine the diplomatic and the military if you're going to be effective," the secretary stressed, making it clear "that the capability is there and the resolve is there to use it, if we want a peaceful solution."

At several points, Baker reiterated that "there has been no decision to use force."

President Bush has said that "if force becomes necessary — and let's hope that we can resolve this peacefully — that force will be used massively and decisively." Baker pointed out, "It's one of the things, quite frankly, that has contributed to this debate — the fact that we have moved so much force to the region because we do not want to repeat the mistakes that were made in Vietnam," he said.

Baker noted that the president has said he would welcome a congressional endorsement of the United Nations Security Council's action last week in adopting a resolution authorising the use of force if necessary, but he noted that "so far, of course, the congressional leadership has declined to take that approach."

Baker emphasised several times that "we need to keep in mind who and what we're dealing with here." In the past Saddam Hussein has shown that "he will starve his people to feed his army. He has shown in a very costly eight-year war with Iran a willingness to take 400,000 dead and a million wounded in a country of sixteen million," Baker noted.

On other issues, the secretary stressed "this is certainly not an appropriate time" for convening an international conference on the Middle East. He said there has been no shift in U.S. policy on that issue. "We have taken the position for a long time that an international conference, properly structured, at an appropriate time, might be useful," he said when questioned about news reports about the possibility of U.N. resolution that would call for such a conference.

"We are not now recommending an international conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict be held, nor are we supporting a resolution in the Security Council that would seek to convene such a conference," Baker declared. "Precisely because of our consistent position that we will not link the Gulf crisis and the Arab-Israeli dispute, this is certainly not an appropriate time for an international conference," he explained.

Told a questioner that it was important that some countries in the region have the ability to defend themselves, but said he was not aware of any suggestion that the U.S. is seeking to replace Israel with Saudi Arabia as Washington's principal ally in the region. And on a related issue, Baker said future arms control in the region — both for weapons of mass destruction and for conventional arms — was an important question that merits close examination. "I think we need to consider the question of proliferation of conventional arms in this tinder box region. But if we are going to do that," he said, "it means that we must do it across the board in the region. And our strong ally, Israel, will have to be a willing partner and participant in that exercise," Baker said.

Acknowledged that the question of broadening NATO's jurisdiction to out-of-area responsibility was a very important but complex issue about which informal discussions have begun.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 73111-19

PROGRAMME ONE
15:00 Teletext
15:30 Koran
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children programme
17:30 Educational programme
18:00 News Summary
18:10 Local news
19:50 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 News in Arabic
21:00 Local programme
21:30 Local programme
22:00 Arabic series
22:40 News in Arabic
23:10 Series continued

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Frains de Passion
19:15 News in French
19:15 Ajourdui/Hil en France
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Good Morning Miss Bliss
21:00 Encounter
21:30 French feature film
22:00 News in English
22:20 Continuation of the film

PRAYER TIMES

04:54 Fajr
06:18 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:27 Asr
14:13 Maghrib
17:59 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetish, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Ternantia Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625549
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 683336
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 649522

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy with southerly light to moderate wind. In Amman, winds will be southerly moderate and sea calm.
Min./max. temp. 7/23

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 14:27
Dhahran 6:23
Jordan Valley 16:28

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 22, Amman 25. Humidity readings: Amman 47 per cent, Amman 31 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Al Ajam 994184
Dr. Hani Haddadin 777751
Dr. Youcef Rashid 994361
Dr. Issam Al Ammar 890524
Firm pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 783236
Al Asena pharmacy 637052
Nawrokh pharmacy 623672
Al Salem pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsani pharmacy 637660

DEIR:
Dr. Issam Al Saleh (—)
Al Shamsi pharmacy (983238)

ZARQA:
Dr. Sulaiman Abu Adila (—)
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 642412
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 994390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 661277
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010220
Central Amman Telephone 62101
Repairs 62101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 73111
Radio Jordan 74111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 816515
Electric Power 63681
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Alkhadi Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 643362
Molhan, J. Amman 636140
Palatine, Shamsani 664171/4
Shamsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mubarak Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdali 661277
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Irbah, Al-Mubarak 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marks 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/90
Amal Hospital 674153
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983223

Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)5220-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
18:00 Damascus (RJ)
18:15 Amman (RJ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 550 / 450
Banana (Mukammal) 450 / 400
Beans 280 / 220
Cabbage 130 / 90
Carrot 220 / 180
Cauliflower 140 / 90
Cust 150 / 40
Cucumbers (large) 230 / 150
Cucumbers (small) 330 / 250
Dates 500 / 400
Eggplant 200 / 150
Figs 500 / 300
Garlic 1400 / 1000
Grapes 200 / 150
Lemon 180 / 120
Mallow 120 / 80
Marrow (large) 220 / 150
Marrow (small) 200 / 180
Onion (dry) 240 / 180
Onion (green) 180 / 120
Ostra 600 / 500
Orange 250 / 120
Pepper (hot) 200 / 150
Pepper (sweet) 120 / 80
Potato 200 / 180
Radish 160 / 120
Sage 650 / 500
Spinach 180 / 120
Tomatoes 180 / 140

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:20 Cairo (MS)
13:25 Riyadh (SU)
14:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
17:30 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:40 Paris, Damascus (AF)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Amman (RJ)
11:00 Tripoli (RJ)
12:00 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45 London (RJ)
13:15 Rome, Paris (RJ)
13:45 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
21:10 Jeddah (RJ)
21:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:45 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:00 Cairo (RJ)
22:30 Doha (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:15 Beirut (ME)

Home News

VTC to train 14,000

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Labour Ministry's Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) has made plans for providing 14,000 young men and women with training in 34 different trades in the coming year in a bid to help them find jobs and reduce the unemployment problem in Jordan, according to VTC Director General Ahmad Atwan.

"Special attention is being given in the coming year to rural and remote areas where vocational training centres will be set up for men and women in various governorates," Atwan said.

"Two new centres for young women and housewives will be opened, one at Um Nuwara near Amman, and the other at Rusafa," Atwan said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Atwan said that the VTC would, in the coming year, intensify cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education in the field of vocational training, especially as government schools have special programmes for handicraft work.

"As the country is being flooded with expatriates in need of work the VTC has opened new trades during 1990 and has provided training to 2,006 men and women in the following trades: dressmaking, bakery, hotel management, truck driving, home economics, artificial flower making, tricot making, ceramics, and textile work."

"In the 1990 programme, the VTC centres offered training to a total of 9,856 men and women in 34 trades, each following different programmes with different durations," Atwan said.

He said that the apprenticeship programme was normally short and only those who completed the secondary education were accepted. "There is another programme where those with preparatory school education can be accepted," Atwan explained.

During 1990, the VTC opened two training centres: one at Ghor Al Safi in southern Jordan and the other at the Sahab Industrial City near Amman. These centres offer training in industrial businesses, according to Atwan.

Atwan announced that the VTC last month had conducted a general survey to determine Jordan's requirements of skilled manpower in all fields and at different levels and had found out that there was urgent need for skilled men and women to work in leather tanning, readymade clothes, bakeries, hotels and flour mills.

Jordanian, Iraqi dentists call for 'equitable' implementation of U.N. resolutions

AMMAN (Petra) — A joint meeting involving the dentists associations of Iraq and Jordan which ended recently in Baghdad issued a statement reaffirming the dentists' common strategy and position with regard to the Gulf crisis and the situation in the occupied Arab territories, and calling for joint efforts to deal with both challenges.

The statement was published here Thursday following the return to Amman of a delegation representing the Jordanian Dentists Association (JDA).

According to the statement, the dentists of Iraq and Jordan are committed to respond to the call of holy war and be involved in the battle of honour in defence of the Arab Nation and its holy places.

The statement voiced full support for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's Aug. 12 initiative in which he stressed the need for resolving all Middle East issues on equitable basis and in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The dentists condemned the resolutions which were issued by the Security Council under the influence of the United States imposing an economic embargo on Iraq and launching aggression on the Iraqi people because such resolutions, the statement said, are bound to consecrate the imposition of colonial hegemony on the Arab World and its resources.

The statement also voiced full support for the Palestinian people involved in the intifada against the Israeli occupation and said that dentists would do all in their power and work with all available means to provide backing and moral and material support for the Palestinian people and to support their just struggle.

According to the statement, the dentists of Iraq and Jordan will back Iraq's heroic stand at all levels to confront American-Zionist aggression and will support the Palestinians in the race of Israeli occupation.

The statement called for the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions on the Palestine issue, for an end to Israel's atrocities, and a halt to U.S. backing of Israel's expansionist schemes.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

- King congratulates Kohl**
AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday sent a cable to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl congratulating him in his name and on behalf of Jordan's people and government on his party's winning in the elections which took place recently in united Germany.
- Palestinian cultural week starts**
AMMAN (Petra) — Under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein the Jordanian-Palestinian cultural week will be inaugurated at the Royal Cultural Centre Saturday. The week, organised by the Ministry of Culture in cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Department of Culture, includes lectures, exhibitions, symposia, plays and poetry recitals.
- UNHCR delegation arrives**
AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation representing the Geneva-based United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) arrives in Amman Saturday on a three-day visit to Jordan. The delegation will meet Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Salem Masadeh and the ministry's Secretary General Saleh Hamad for talks on issues related to evacuees crossing into Jordan from Iraq and Kuwait following Iraq's Aug. 2 takeover of Kuwait and the emergency plans for any future influx of evacuees.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- EXHIBITIONS**
 - Exhibition of British archaeological projects in Jordan at the Royal Cultural Centre.
 - Exhibition of ceramics by Hazem Zu'bi; stone lamps by Hind Taher; Islamic calligraphy by Amer Makhssas at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani.
 - Exhibition entitled "L'orient des cafes" at the French Cultural Centre.
- FILMS**
 - German film for children entitled "Die Pyramide des Sonnenpeters" at the Goethe Institute — 4:00 p.m.
 - Fritz Lang Film Festival: silent film entitled "Dr. Mabuse der Spieler" (1922 production; titled Hush in English) at the Goethe Institute — 8:00 p.m.
- AQABA CULTURAL WEEK**
 - Exhibition entitled "Goethe-Forum" at Aqaba Visitors' Centre (opens 3:30 p.m.)
 - Exhibition entitled "Alia — an Islamic City on the China Sea" at Aqaba Visitors' Centre (opens 3:30 p.m.)

Zaben urges Arab pharmacists to unify laws, ensure self-sufficiency

AMMAN (J.T.) — The executive council of the Arab Pharmacists Federation (APF) has opened a four-day meeting in Amman to discuss the pharmaceutical industry in the Arab World and preparations for convening the federation's 11th meeting.

The meetings, which are due to end Sunday, are also scheduled to discuss the duty of Arab pharmacists under the present difficult circumstances and the challenges posed to the Arab Nation, according to the head of a local committee which prepared for the meetings, Munther Salamch.

He said two seminars on the Palestinian intifada and the shortage of medicines in Iraq would be held during the coming meetings.

He said that one of the main issues stressed by the federation's council was the problem of ensuring basic food, like milk, for children in Iraq which is facing an embargo unprecedented in human history.

Health Minister Mohammad Adhoub Al Zaben in his opening address urged the participants in the meeting to find means of providing medicine and essential food for the people of Iraq.

"The Arab World is confronted by serious challenges on the eastern flank (Iraq) and the western flank (occupied Palestine) and is facing a dangerous aggression which should unite the Arab people and find means of cooperation to achieve that goal," the minister said.

Zaben also urged the meeting to unify legislations governing the pharmaceutical industry and to ensure self-sufficiency for the Arab World in medicines.

The question of common threats posed to the Iraqi and the Arab people in general was also the theme of an address by Tayseer Al Homs, president of the Jordanian Pharmacists Association (JPA) which organised the meeting in Amman.

Homs said that Arab pharmacists had the duty to rally in support of the Palestinians who are waging their intifada against the Israeli occupation, and to back the Iraqi people who are threatened with aggression. He said that JPA was totally committed to help the Iraqi people and back the Palestinians in their steadfastness.

APF Secretary General Hisham Al Thaher echoed the same theme and said that the Arab people were now more determined than ever before to confront the conspiracies directed against the Arab Nation.

He attacked the United States for trying to impose its hegemony on the Arab World and for imposing an economic embargo on Jordan and Iraq.

The meetings are attended by delegates from Iraq, Libya, Algeria and Tunisia as well as Jordan.



Mohammad Al Zaben

Jordan prepares to repatriate foreigners coming from Iraq

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — Jordan, which played host to over 800,000 evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait since the Gulf crisis, is now gearing up for a possible massive influx of foreigners released from Iraq, Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin said Friday.

Izzeddin's comments came one day after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein announced that all foreigners in Iraq since the Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait were allowed to leave. The exodus could perhaps begin Saturday, depending on the issuance of exit visas.

Iraqi and Western diplomats here said Iraqi Airways could introduce additional flights to Amman to cope with the expected heavy wave of passengers.

Amman, the only destination of the Iraqi national carrier after the U.N. imposed an air blockade against Iraq, has been serving as a key transit point for almost all evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait, whether by air or land.

Hundreds of Westerners, mostly peace activists and diplomats, have also flown in and out of Baghdad through Amman in the past four months in addition to the dozens of groups of foreigners released off and on by Iraq in response to appeals by foreign statesmen and peace activists.

Iraq, which had banned thousands of foreigners from leaving in a bid to deter attack by the multinational forces in the Gulf, has indicated that its preference to fly out those left behind would be to have governments fly in airplanes to Amman to pick up those arriving from Baghdad aboard Iraqi Airways.

Countries wishing to send special flights to Baghdad to pick up their nationals must first get clearance from the U.N. Sanctions Committee, according to Western and Iraqi diplomats here.

"Jordan is prepared to receive all those who wish to leave Iraq," Izzeddin said in an interview. "We are prepared to receive any number of people."

All concerned authorities and government departments have been alerted to "facilitate the travel procedures of foreigners," the minister said.

Izzeddin said that airport officials "will work around the clock to provide comfort and meet the urgent needs of the foreign arrivals."

He said that Jordanian hospitals "were prepared and well equipped to receive emergency cases."

The minister said those who wished to stay in Jordan before departing for home, "we have enough empty rooms for them in our hotels."

Enough hotel vacancies would have been difficult under normal circumstances in Jordan, one of the major tourist destinations in the Middle East prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

"You can be sure that we are prepared to meet the needs (of the evacuees) and we welcome them in their second home, Jordan," Izzeddin said.

Muslims march to commemorate intifada

AMMAN (R) — More than 2,000 Muslims demonstrated in Amman Friday to mark the third anniversary of the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The men, some carrying banners and copies of the Koran, gathered after Friday prayers to chant pro-uprising songs and hail more than 742 Palestinians who have been killed by Israel during the revolt, which enters its fourth year Sunday.

"With our blood and soul we will redeem Palestine," shouted the demonstrators. "No to peace conference," they said.

Other youths, carrying a mock coffin of a Palestinian "martyr," shouted "Yes to weapons," and "Yes, we will die but we will uphold (the Jews) from our land."

The march was organised by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Special committees to run mosques

AMMAN (Petra) — Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Ali Al Faqr has adopted a decision endorsing the formation of special committees to run mosques.

Faqr added that the committees would supervise the collection of contributions to mosques and disburse them on maintenance and expansion of mosques. They will also undertake field surveys aimed at identifying poor families and channelling aid to them in cooperation with the Zakat (alms) committees.

Director of the Ministry's Preaching and Guidance Department Yehya Koukash said that the ministry had embarked on a number of measures aimed at spreading awareness of the dangers of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) on the occasion of the World Day for Fighting AIDS.

He said the ministry was preparing a special bulletin on protection of the society from AIDS. The paper, he said, would be distributed free along with a special magazine issued by the ministry.

First group of foreigners leave Iraq today

(Continued from page 1)

"I would like to take this opportunity to express our regret for the discomfort that was caused to all our guests and their families," the envoy, Mohammad Al Mashat, said in a televised interview on the ABC network. He said he expected them to leave in a "very, very short time," possibly in the next few days.

"We haven't expected anything in return in the past, nor do we expect anything in return for this decision" to free the foreigners, Mashat said.

He played down a published report linking the release of the foreigners with Iraq's desire to upgrade coming talks with the United States into comprehensive negotiations on Middle East issues.

"We were asking for negotiations before all of these decisions," he said. "We put everything on the table. We are ready to negotiate everything."

The Washington Post, in a Doha, Saudi Arabia-dated report, Friday quoted Arab diplomats and analysts as saying Saddam wanted to turn the coming talks into negotiations on other issues. The United States has consistently refused to directly link the Gulf to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Iran called the Iraqi move a positive gesture while the world has been waiting for.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Iran hoped moves towards peace would continue but repeated Tehran's position that U.S.-led foreign forces should leave the Gulf.

"It is a positive gesture that the world has been waiting for. It is not justified to detain innocent people against their will. We hope this kind of gesture towards the end of the crisis will continue," Velayati said.

Iran would not join a war against Iraq but fully supported U.N. resolutions calling on Baghdad to quit Kuwait, he said.

"We believe the security of the region can be maintained by the countries of the region. The presence of foreign forces is in contradiction with that," Velayati said.

Britain said Friday it was advising its nationals in Kuwait to stay in hiding until their safety could be assured.

Prime Minister John Major said he remained cautious about Iraq's decision, while the Foreign Office said it was seeking clarification from Baghdad before advising Britons to come out of hiding in Kuwait.

"We are continuing to advise people in Kuwait to be cautious and to stay where they are for the time being," a Foreign Office spokesman said.

In a BBC radio interview on Friday, Major said he was still cautious about the Iraqi move and urged Baghdad to let them return home without "let or hindrance."

He said their release was welcome but Iraq must still comply with United Nations resolutions calling for it to make an unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait or risk war.

"There can be no compromise from that point of view and the (U.N.) security council resolutions have made that absolutely clear," Major told BBC radio.

"I don't think the world is going to stand by and watch Kuwait be invaded and dismantled in the way it is."

Saudi Arabian newspapers reacted cautiously to the Iraqi move with several saying it could be a bid to undermine the anti-Baghdad coalition.

The daily Al Youm said the initiative "could be a dirty new game to dismantle the international cohesion over the crisis."

Al Bilad welcomed Baghdad's offer and hoped the initiative would be one of a series of similar positive steps.

Tokyo welcomes Baghdad's decision, Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu said.

Kaifu said in a statement: "If the report of freeing hostages is correct and all foreigners are granted an immediate and unconditional release, it should be truly a joyous occasion and a happy event."

Jordan to start receiving external aid this week

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan should receive about \$230 million in untied loans from Japan and Germany between this week and the end of the year to help it cope with the adverse effects of the Gulf crisis and the economic sanctions against Iraq, officials and diplomats said Friday.

Bilateral agreements have been signed and the donor countries are awaiting Jordanian instructions to allocate the amounts, they said. Both the Japanese and German loans are long-maturity, soft-term loans, which, according to economists, make it "as good as outright grants."

In addition, Jordan and Japan have launched negotiations over two loan packages of \$75 million each, and the credits would be disbursed as soon as final agreements have been reached, said a diplomatic source.

While the \$100 million loan carries an interest of one per cent and is repayable in 30 years with 10 years grace (the same term apply to the German loan), the two new Japanese packages will be under stricter terms, with an interest rate of around four to five per cent and shorter maturity, the diplomat said.

Since the Japanese and German loans, as well as other bilateral credits from Italy, Canada, France and the Netherlands were granted to help offset the losses sustained as a result of the Gulf crisis, the untied loans could be used to settle Jordan's payments retroactive to Aug. 2, the day Iraq invaded Kuwait, triggering the crisis.

Italy is giving \$26.5 million, Canada has allocated \$22.8 million, France has granted \$20 million, the Netherlands is offering around \$18 million and Taiwan has given \$20 million. Most of the assistance has come over and above the regular economic cooperation programmes between the donors and Jordan.

Meanwhile, the European Commission has cleared snags in its budget allocations as assistance to countries hard hit by the Gulf crisis. The European Parliament blocked the allocations last month saying that the funds should not be taken away from other vital European Community (EC) projects. A compromise was worked out earlier this week, EC diplomats said, and the Strasbourg-based parliament is expected to endorse the budget next week.

However, the EC allocations — a total of 1.5 billion European currency units (about \$2 billion) of which one third will come from the European Commission budget and the rest from the 12 member states — will be available to the beneficiaries only in the first quarter of 1991.

Although undetermined yet, almost all of Jordan's share of the European Commission budget allocation will be in the form of outright grants to help the Kingdom's balance of payments and imports, according to European diplomats.

The rest of the EC assistance would be disbursed in line with bilateral agreement between the donors and beneficiaries, and the European Commission might be handling some of these contributions. Jordanian and EC officials have almost completed the groundwork for the possible allocations.

The government has drawn up a 1991 budget taking into consideration "only realistic expectations of foreign assistance." The budget is under study by the Financial Committee of the Lower House.

Jordanian officials have said that the external assistance would be used to help streamline the national economy and put it back on track towards recovery under programmes worked out domestically as well as with the International Monetary Fund and the

Meeting on population education, development issues recommends

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) concluded a four-day meeting in Amman Thursday and issued a set of recommendations, considered as the Arab World declaration on population activities, which would be submitted to an international conference on population education and development to be organised by UNESCO in Paris during 1992.

Following are major excerpts of the recommendations issued at the end of the meeting which was attended by delegations from Arab states:

"The participants emphasise the need for all Arab countries to adopt a defined policy on population, which would be in harmony with national development plans, taking into consideration the basic characteristics of each society and aiming at achieving the goals of population education because such education is considered as one of the basic components of the education system. This education is needed in order to upgrade the quality of life and to meet the basic needs of the population and help meet the socio-economic needs of various communities."

"The participants call on Arab countries to enhance the involvement of various targeted groups in population education programmes, in not only planning of such programmes but also in their implementation."

"The participants stress the importance of raising the proficiency of instructors and trainers at national and regional levels, of using modern training techniques, of preparing educational aids, of supporting national documentation centres which gather data and information about population and the role of population communication channels."

"The participants called for encouraging cooperation and coordination among regional and local concerned centres, setting up a regional training centre for documenting and publishing information and data related to population education."

"The conference's final statement said that the Arab World was facing various challenges which tended to impede economic and social programmes. "To confront these challenges, there is urgent need to intensify efforts to enable the Arab society to carry out projects that would ensure a better and secure future and a better quality of life for all its citizens," the statement said.

The participants reviewed working papers dealing with population programmes in the Arab World based on statistics and data provided by 15 Arab countries, a summary of projects being implemented in the Arab region in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and an assessment of issues common to the Arab World and related to population and population communication."

The 40 participants came from Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Lebanon and Bahrain.

Baker, Shevardnadze to meet

(Continued from page 1)

weapon, will be limited by a side letter to the actual treaty, a U.S. official said.

On sales to Britain, the United States may proceed with its special cooperative relationship but the Soviet Union will state that if any sale changes the strategic balance, Moscow can withdraw from the treaty, the U.S. official added.

The United States backed off its demand for strict limits on testing to restrict modernisation of SS18s. In return, Moscow pledged that any modernised SS18 would have no increase in throw-weight — the amount of nuclear firepower it could launch — which was a major U.S. concern, he told Reuters.

Since September, other issues have emerged relating to monitoring the treaty and data. But U.S. officials and other arms control experts said they believed Baker and Shevardnadze could resolve them in Houston.

Jordan welcomes

(Continued from page 1)

continuing its efforts to secure such a meeting.

In his comments to the BBC, Information Minister Izzeddin stressed the importance of holding an international peace conference to reach a permanent and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, saying that the new realities which have emerged as a result of the Gulf crisis and the great developments 'the region is witnessing are now directing more attention to the Palestine question.'

have lifted the embargo on dialogue with Iraq. This should be a signal for all of us Arabs to see to it that an Arab-Arab dialogue today should be given more consideration than before," Qasem said.

"It would be rather strange not to see an Arab-Arab dialogue, and in this case between Iraq and Saudi Arabia," the foreign minister said noting that Jordan was

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The sky is the limit

THE decision of Iraq to release all detained foreign nationals is a positive move in the direction of peace in the Gulf region. No matter how much hawkish members of the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq try to belittle this step, it remains in the eyes of the international community a big investment by Baghdad in the embryonic peace process in the Gulf region. Constituting a cardinal request by the U.N. Security Council in its very first resolution on the Kuwaiti situation, its fulfillment by Baghdad sends a clear signal that Iraq, as always, prefers accommodation with the world rather than confrontation. Seen against this backdrop the move has effectively relegated the war option, which is being so religiously pursued by some members of the Bush administration, and consolidated the peace option.

Washington would look irresponsible in the eyes of the American people and their representatives in Congress, not to mention the international community, if it continued its current bellicose rhetoric and war preparation against Iraq in the wake of this Iraqi decision. Instead of continuing to fan the war fever, Washington is called upon to reciprocate this Iraqi signal by word and deed. This way the impending talks between the two sides would have a chance to become fruitful.

Ostensibly Iraq has decided to free the foreign nationals because there is no longer any need for them. This would suggest that either Iraq feels that its military preparedness has been completed and therefore there is no longer need for a human shield against attacks from its enemies or that it views the chances of a war breaking out in the Gulf as remote.

The timing also suggests that His Majesty King Hussein, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Yemeni Vice President Ali Salem Al Beedh have a great deal to do with the shaping of this decision. Having just concluded a mini-summit with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Tuesday, there is little doubt that the Arab leaders have discussed this peace overture from Baghdad and counselled in its favour. The fact that Saddam Hussein responded so swiftly and boldly to the Arab leaders' appeal for magnanimity augments the argument often submitted in support of maintaining active Arab contacts with Iraq at the highest level. Isolating Baghdad either internationally or regionally can never advance the peace process in the Gulf area. If Washington enters the projected talks with Baghdad in good faith and with clean hands there is little doubt that such talks would also come to fruition. President Bush's men need first and foremost to cleanse their hearts and minds from blind hatred against Iraq and the Arab World. If they do, then the sky is the limit on how much the two sides can accomplish in Baghdad and Washington.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic daily has underlined the need for Washington and its allies in the Gulf crisis to issue a declaration announcing openly that there is no intention whatsoever for destroying the Iraqi military power. The paper said that such a commitment is needed if the Washington-Baghdad talks are to achieve headway and eventual success. The paper also called for linking the solution of the Gulf crisis to a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, stressing that both issues should be dealt with an equal footing in respect of U.N. Security Council resolutions and in implementation of the will of the world community. The paper said that Israel has explicitly displayed its fears about a possible peaceful settlement that could ensue from the U.S.-Iraq dialogue, leaving the Iraqi military power intact. For this reason, the paper said, we now hear voices in Israel like that of David Levy expressing concern over the outcome of the dialogue and insisting that the United States should undertake the task of destroying the Iraqi military power as it had allegedly promised to do. The paper said that the U.S. administration would do well to disengage itself from any promises to commit evil and rather opt for peace and meaningful talks with Baghdad for a solution of all Middle Eastern problems as called for by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in his Aug. 12 peace initiative.

Al Dastour daily criticised Arab countries involved in the American-led anti-Iraq coalition for not following in Washington's footsteps and embarking on a dialogue with Iraqi leadership to help find a settlement to the Gulf crisis. The paper said that America's allies in the Gulf have been ignored by U.S. administration which went behind their back and openly declared its intention of holding a dialogue with Baghdad. For this reason, Saudi Arabia, the country which could be the most affected by any Gulf conflict, should at least try to find a way of talking with Baghdad. Saudi Arabia which is shouldering the cost of the multinational force on its soil and a country which has all the reason to protect Iraq's military power that can serve as a stabilising force in the Gulf region, should reciprocate Iraq's overtures for peace and dialogue especially as the Iraqi leadership had been openly declaring that it will never launch aggression on Saudi Arabia, said Al Dastour. Riyadh is now called on to take up its seat at the negotiating table and help find a solution that will not only prevent destruction of its infrastructure and oil wealth but can also ensure that stability and security in the region will be sustained. Saudi Arabia, the paper added, has all the reason to do that especially in the light of the fact that the Israeli enemy is the only party that would benefit from the destruction of Iraq and the other Arab states.

Kuwait's foreign holdings — business as usual?

By Maria Kielmas

Thought much early speculation about how the Kuwaiti government in exile will administer its considerable foreign holdings has long since disappeared from banner headlines, hawk-eyed observers into the world's financial and oil markets are noticing the beginnings of a readjustment. The Iraqi invasion left the state oil company, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), in a position comparable to that of country subsidiaries of some oil multinationals in the 1960s or 1970s when they were nationalised and lost their sources of crude supply. By the same token, the Kuwait Investment Office (KIO) has to function on its cash flow without being bailed out by the government; rather like a pension fund no longer receiving contributions from its members.

Like many governments worldwide, Kuwait has tended to promote publicly the notion that its state enterprises conduct their affairs under the same business criteria as any other private sector company. The managements of some European state companies who clung to the same concept found their illusions shattered when, during a part privatisation process, stock exchange rules required disclosure of uncomfortable large chunks of previously "confidential" information and detailed workings of accounting procedures. No one expects KIO and KPC to seek outside equity, but KIO and the funds it controls own huge slices of major Western companies. So who owns KIO, how it functions and the politics of the present and future Kuwaiti governments will have a significant effect on investor confidence and credit worthiness of these Western companies. The Kuwait government's insistence on "business as usual" has increased rather than

allayed those companies' fears.

The status of KIO and KPC

The 1969 Kuwaiti constitution says that sovereignty belongs to the nation and power is divided between the emir, parliament and the executive. Under Clause 1 the emir may nominate by decree his successor and the prime minister, who do not need to be the same person. But these nominations must be approved by parliament. Under this constitution, the emir does not have the power to suspend the constitution, a facility which exists for some rulers, notably in nominally democratic countries of Latin America. State companies cannot be established or administered by emiri decree.

KIO and the Fund for Future Generations were established under a parliamentary decree which also stipulated that the KIO runs the latter fund. By contrast KPC was established by what has been dubbed an "administrative exercise" on the part of the oil ministry, not by parliamentary decree. When the KPC was set up it was financed through borrowing from the KIO, making the Ministry of Finance, which controls KIO, the effective controller of the national oil industry. KPC was further reorganised after the 1981 purchase of U.S. based Santa Fe Corporation so that the company, meaning a business, not the state was the first owner of the former U.S. organisation.

As the ultimate owner of these assets is the state Kuwait, lawyers now ask what is, and what will be, the state and government of Kuwait? Today that is the internationally recognised government in exile. But when the Gulf conflict is resolved, whether through war or diplomacy, if international

recognition shifts to a new government, with or without the present emir, then that government will be the ultimate arbiter of the \$100bn or so of the state's foreign assets. And that government's policy could be radically different from the present.

Many Kuwaiti exiles readily admit that their country's future will be decided by the major powers. Promises of a post-liberation democracy made during the recent Jeddah congress seem incompatible with an exiled government which is not one of national unity and within a region which may not welcome the development. What is clear is that this government needs money, to support its nationals and its allies. And the source of it is its foreign holdings. A future government, democratic or otherwise, may demand a detailed account of how these were conducted.

Investment strategy

Ever since Kuwait first started investing overseas, conspiracy theories have abounded that its rulers had other motives in mind. The KIO has been called variously a corporate raider, short term speculator and worse, and has done little to help its image by remaining silent about its investment strategy. Aggressive acquisition of 22 per cent of British Petroleum and 14 per cent of Germany's Daimler Benz proved an embarrassment all round and in Germany prompted new laws regulating foreign investors. When the British government obliged KIO to reduce its stake in British Petroleum to 9.9 per cent it safeguarded the pill by treating KIO as a sovereign state rather than an investment trust, meaning that it was exempt from corporation tax. KIO is assumed to hold the same status now.

Although the Kuwaiti government says it has enough liquid funds to meet its liabilities at present, this can change if the crisis is prolonged. In any case, experience of war in oil producing countries has shown that Kuwait is unlikely to be liberated without at least someone sabotaging some oil installations. So a free Kuwait will have little new income at first. But in today's fragile capital markets, which in a shooting war will nose-dive, it takes at least several months between a small pension fund making a decision to shift its market position and the money actually being transferred. The difficulties for something the size of KIO to do the same can be best illustrated by comparing the manoeuvrability of a supertanker with that of a racing yacht.

Some bankers have speculated that KIO could sell some less prestigious assets while others think that a quiet, across-the-board sale would be more appropriate. Freezing orders imposed by Western governments on these accounts immediately after the invasion have been modified to allow for normal trading. This prospect has made all companies with KIO on their share registers very nervous, though none admits so publicly. Already KIO disposals of holdings in small oil exploration companies have caused those shares to plummet in value at a time when they should be outperforming the market. Complicating matters further is KIO's tax status, or lack of it.

This latter point has already been addressed by the KPC management, which is seeking both a new physical and a tax location. KPC thinking is that any compromise with, in this case, the British government over its tax status is only a short term solution, while management must think of

long term contingencies. As all other foreign state or privately owned investment trusts pay tax, sooner or later, lawyers argue, KIO will have to catch up with KPC's thinking. Such an event would decrease KIO's income, making asset liquidation even more likely, unless the ruling Al-Sabah family meets some calls from its personal accounts.

Oil profits

KPC's future capital investment largely depends on how much money the KIO can spare, even though the oil company, like most Kuwaiti state enterprises, kept the bulk of its funds abroad. Its only ready income comes from its foreign refining and marketing subsidiary, Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), which runs three refineries and networks of petrol stations throughout Western Europe. Like other petrol companies, KPI makes its profits on the margin between crude and refining costs and pump prices and curiously has to face the same accusations made by motorists of companies "profiteering" from the Gulf crisis.

In reorganising itself abroad in a situation where its domestic oil production subsidiary, Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), effectively on longer exists, KPC has to meet its liabilities without domestic oil income acting as a cushion. Some of its 32-strong tanker fleet can be rechartered but their real costs are still uncertain. Crude oil supplies for KPI have to be bought, principally from a deal with Saudi Arabia but also on the spot market. There then remains the future of its drilling affiliate, Santa Fe, thought to be making an operating profit now but not one which will recoup the enormous costs sunk by KPC since its acquisition in 1981. Most questions are being directed at the fore-

ing oil exploration subsidiary, Kufpec, first established in London in 1981 but moved back to Kuwait in 1986.

Kufpec has always been a tool of foreign policy and foreign aid, rather like the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, not a company required to find oil in foreign parts for profit. It now holds interests in countries such as Sudan, Yemen and Tunisia, whose positions on the Gulf conflict are regarded as pro-Iraqi. As Kuwaiti government officials have hinted directly and indirectly over the last few months that they see no reason to support those who do not sympathise wholly with Kuwait, a shedding of Kufpec's oil exploration concessions is expected. This may happen slowly, without too much fanfare and may be explained by KPC as an allocation of priorities rather than a political move. But already lots of oil companies are queuing up to buy.

Kufpec's position reflects the way governments may badly sting themselves when they run state enterprises along political lines, even though because of their very nature these companies cannot be wholly market oriented. Instead of using its initial \$300m budget to find oil where it occurred geologically, it was directed to look where it was convenient politically. If the former strategy had been adopted, a kind of geographical diversification all private sector companies follow, KPC today would have had enough foreign oil supplies to serve its foreign outlets instead of the present meagre 30,000 barrels a day, in the process saving its own funds and those of KIO. It is a bitter irony which a future Kuwait government, with far more pressing priorities, may well ponder over — Middle East International.

Is Ozal gambling?

By Alistair Lyon
Reuter

ANKARA — The resignation of Turkey's military chief has highlighted growing complaints that President Turgut Ozal's Gulf policy is belligerent and his style high-handed. Armed Forces Chief of Staff Necip Torumtay quit last week, saying: "the principles I believe in and my understanding of the state render it impossible for me to continue my service."

Turkish analysts say he was protesting at Ozal's advocacy of a more active part in the U.S.-led coalition ranged against Iraq against the advice of the military and foreign ministry.

NATO-member Turkey has sent 35,000 more troops to join 65,000 already in the southeast area bordering Iraq and has enforced U.N. sanctions, cutting two Iraqi oil export pipelines.

A U.S. official said Washington would press its NATO allies for more help in the military buildup against Iraq at a meeting of NATO defence ministers in Brussels last Wednesday.

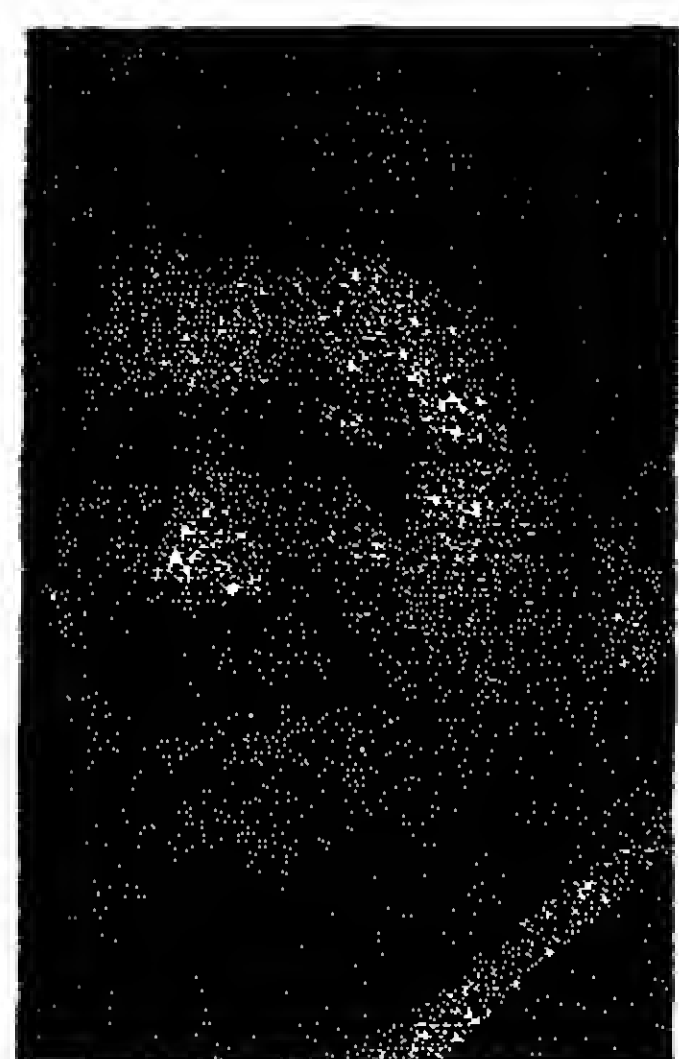
Newspapers said Torumtay disagreed with Ozal at a national security council meeting on Friday called to discuss the U.N. resolution authorising force against Iraq if it does not leave Kuwait by Jan. 15.

They said Ozal had wanted to send troops to Saudi Arabia, allow use of the U.S.-Turkish air base at Incirlik in southern Turkey for cross-border operations and even open a second front against Baghdad in the event of war.

The Turkish leader has publicly ruled out the second front option but told reporters last month that while Ankara favoured a peaceful solution it "would not say no" to war. Remarks like these alarm generals, opposition parties and many ordinary Turks who oppose military action against Iraq.

Ozal is basking in Western approval for his tough stance against Iraq's Saddam Hussein but his domestic critics accuse him of dragging Turkey towards war at Washington's behest.

The president has talked frequently by telephone with U.S. President George Bush and other heads of state since Iraq grabbed Kuwait but has barely consulted his own government.



Turgut Ozal

'Ozal is basking in Western approval for his tough stance against Iraq's Saddam Hussein but his domestic critics accuse him of dragging Turkey towards war at Washington's behest.'

His defence and foreign ministers resigned in October. "Ozal is gambling," a government source said of Turkey's unusually high profile in the Gulf crisis. "Let's hope he wins."

The outcome in the Gulf may decide whether Ozal can maintain his dominance of Turkish politics. His control over decision-making has aroused resentment at a time when inflation and labour unrest have increased the government's unpopularity.

In practice he has discarded the concept of a figurehead president untainted by party politics and last month openly called for the 1982 constitution to be rewritten.

The constitution empowers presidents to call parliamentary elections, summon meetings of parliament and the cabinet, decide to use the armed forces and help appoint the chief of staff.

Ozal has exploited these powers as never before and governs through Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut, a colourful former parliament speaker and Motherland Party colleague.

He wants the president to be elected by the people, not by parliament as now, and has suggested changing the constitution ahead of parliamentary elections due in 1992.

He has not called for greater presidential powers but for changes that would let presidents retain party links, sweep away political restrictions and put more stress on human rights.

"Ozal's constitutional changes would not alter much in the system," said Muztas Soyral, a constitutional law professor.

"But formally he is supposed to be above party politics."

Opposition parties mostly agree that the constitution, drafted after a 1980 coup ended a decade of political violence, is due for overhaul, but not on how it should be done.

The rightwing True Path Party of former Premier Sileyman Demirel favours direct presidential elections.

The left, led by the Social Democrat Populist Party of Erdal Inonu, opposes direct presidential elections but does want to enshrine political freedom and human rights.

Inonu's Party, the main opposition group, has criticised Ozal for encouraging Islamic fundamentalist sentiment which seeks to alter Turkey's secular system.

"We will not accept a constitutional change to help a man with anti-sectarian traditions to become a dictator," Inonu said.

The military, which sees itself as guardian of the secularist reforms of Turkey's founder Kemal Ataturk, has also shown signs of unease about growing fundamentalist influence — last month Ozal's Motherland Party voted through parliament a bill to let women wear Islamic headscarves in universities.

Torumtay's replacement, general Dogan Gunec, is reported to hold similar views to his predecessor, suggesting that the top brass will continue to resist Ozal's perceived enthusiasm for a Gulf adventure.

EC scrambles for a foreign policy formula

By Andres Wolberg-Stok
Reuter

BRUSSELS — The European Community, its old certainties shattered by the end of the cold war, is scrambling to give itself a foreign affairs and security role.

The changes have been swift and enormous: "...One former 'enemy', East Germany, has been shoeboxed into the EC as part of reunited Germany — the EC's biggest member."

Other Eastern European reformers are lining up to join the community, demanding aid in the meantime.

...NATO, the U.S.-led military alliance which kept the former Eastern European foes at bay, has lost its main focus. New pacts to close the cold war era will flush from Europe thousands of U.S. troops stationed on the continent since the end of World War II.

All this turmoil has left the community as the lone rallying force in Europe — but the Gulf crisis has highlighted its lack of muscle.

"The notion of historic acceleration is often a worn cliché," says Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos, whose country takes over the bloc's six-month rotating presidency from Italy in January. "(But) it is true to such an extent that now the pace has raced out of control."

On Dec. 15, EC leaders will open in Rome several months of talks in a so-called Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to adapt the community's treaties to the new context and develop a common foreign and security policy.

The conference has been organised under the heading of "political union." This loose term includes efforts to broaden the EC's brief to take in a host of new matters beyond the barrier-free single market and to streamline decision-making.

A parallel IGC will work on Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the effort by the community to establish a single currency managed by an independent European central bank.

But while EMU has been on the EC agenda for nearly two and a half years, political union is a recent addition on which disagreement runs deep. "One can expect intense, even explosive debates," Jacques Delors, president of the EC's executive European commission, said in a speech last week.

The EC so far has largely restricted itself to trade, mon-

etary, fiscal and social aspects that need to be harmonised to create a single market of 340-million people after 1992.

Member countries spoke and acted on their own on the world scene, donning their EC hats on global trade issues but forced to step under an umbrella called European Political Cooperation (EPC) to agree joint declarations or common action in the face of major events.

While the EC as such worked on aid to the so-called frontline states worst hit by the Gulf crisis, foreign ministers met as EPC — often over lunch during EC meetings — to discuss other action.

The distinction is blurred at best, but it exists formally and must go if the bloc is to speak with one voice.

An official summary of national positions, written for the IGC by the secretary of the EC council of ministers and of which Reuters obtained a copy, shows that member countries already agree that no aspect of foreign and security policy should be excluded.

But the time print on security — a topic which some countries believe would inevitably lead to considering a defence role for the EC in the long term — remains a source of division.

Britain in particular is anxious to keep the United States in Europe and insists that commitments to NATO must be retained.

Others are prepared to consider different options including the gradual incorporation as a community body of the Western European Union (WEU), a low-activity agency which groups nine EC members of NATO.

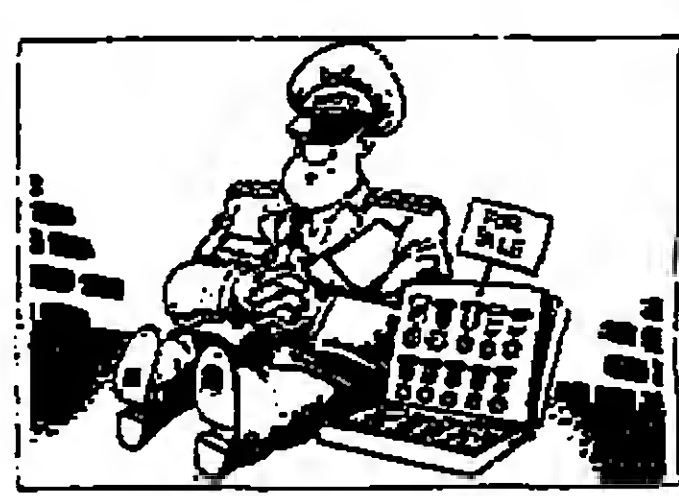
"The real fear is about NATO and what would happen there with the Americans," said one diplomat. "The Americans have a role to play in Europe — politically, at least."

The main points of agreement include: — Foreign and security policy should be incorporated gradually as a community responsibility.

— The revised EC treaty should list the general aims of the common policy.

— A single group of ministers, probably foreign ministers, should be entrusted with all topics related to this new brief.

— The EC's executive European commission should have a right to launch proposals, but not the exclusive right it enjoys in



other areas of EC business

— The EC's rotating six-month presidency should play a bigger external role together with the commission to ensure the bloc speaks with one voice

— The 518-seat European Parliament, directly elected by over 100 million voters but armed with few powers, should be consulted regularly on broad foreign and security policy guidelines.

— The existing secretariat of political cooperation, formally outside the EC, should grow and be fused into the council of ministers secretariat.

This last point could produce a highly powerful unit with access to all information collected by the embassies of EC countries, according to a proposal requested by member governments. It was written by the heads of the secretariats of political cooperation and of the council of ministers.

Under the proposal, which diplomats say is likely to be agreed in one form or another at the IGC, this unit would ensure continuity in policy as different countries take the helm in the rotating presidency.

The head of the unit, a senior diplomat from a member country, would hold the job for four years with the title of political director of the council. He would attend meetings of deputy foreign ministers and help the presidency in its contacts with the parliament, the media and third countries.

The proposal states as a necessary condition for the unit's work "access for the staff to the relevant information collected by member states' representations in third countries," adding: "The necessary confidentiality of this information will be guaranteed."

Diplomats say this unit, although not a foreign ministry in conventional terms, would be highly powerful because of its access to a mass of sensitive information. The data would go beyond that available in Comint, the existing telex network on which foreign ministries circulate encrypted reports.

U.S. offer of immunity from attack is signal in Gulf talks

By John Rogers
Reuters

BAGHDAD — By offering Iraqi President Saddam Hussein immunity from attack if he pulls his armies out of Kuwait, the United States appears to have sent a key signal in the hunt for a solution to the Gulf crisis.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker on Sunday sent Saddam a terse notification that he might get out of the standoff without a war and without sacrificing his own power. Western diplomats in Baghdad said.

"You offer him a way out," one said. "It's something of a bluff, but it's something he might be able to present to his own people."

Baker said that if Saddam complied with the dozen United Nations Security Council resolutions since Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, "his reward for that would not be a military attack by the United States."

Saddam, Iraq's strongman for more than two decades and president since 1979, has been concerned since setting Kuwait that the West wants not only to drive him from the emirate but also to oust him.

Arab diplomats say Saddam sometimes looks strained in his

public appearances and the four-month-old crisis was beginning to show.

"Of course he is worried about staying in power," said one.

Baker's statement, days before planned Washington talks between President George Bush and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, appeared to send a signal that the United States did not want Saddam's downfall.

Baker is due to visit Baghdad after the Aziz talks.

His message to Iraq appeared to be part of a concerted policy which a British newspaper reported was adopted last week by foreign ministers of the five permanent Security Council members — The U.S., Britain, China, France and the Soviet Union.

The Guardian newspaper said the five were ready to offer Baghdad a "no-attack" guarantee if it withdrew from Kuwait, restored the Kuwaiti government and freed foreign hostages.

Saddam has already offered to release more of the 2,000 Westerners and Japanese hostages in groups over three months from December 25, Christmas Day, provided there is no threat of attack.

The ruling Revolution Command Council took action to defuse tension with Moscow on Tuesday, saying all 3,300 Soviet citizens stranded in Iraq since August would be allowed to leave for home from Wednesday.

Iraq has not responded to Baker's statement and has given no sign that it is considering withdrawing from Kuwait. It continued press attacks this week on Bush and U.S. policy.

The ruling Baath Party newspaper Al-Thawra called Bush a liar on Tuesday and said a war with Iraq would not be a swift walkover for the U.S.

"If Bush misunderstands, the American people surely understands that war with Iraq means throwing the U.S. into an annihilating, losing and costly military adventure," it said.

Iraq has, however, made a goodwill gesture in delivering vegetables, cigarettes and 10 cases of Pepsi Cola to the besieged U.S. embassy in Kuwait.

Western diplomats believe it may moderate the tone of its newspaper editorials — important in the atmosphere of the confrontation — as the Washington talks approach.

Ozal increasingly isolated as opposition to policy mounts

By Emel Anil
The Associated Press

ANKARA — President Turgut Ozal, often praised by U.S. President George Bush as a loyal friend and ally for his strong support in the Gulf crisis, is on slippery ground at home.

The 63-year-old president is increasingly isolated, enjoying little public support, frequently faces harsh criticism from establishment groups and defections from the party he founded.

And with the resignation Monday of his top general, it became public that Ozal also has alienated the most powerful of these groups, the military.

The chief of staff, Gen. Necip Torumtay, resigned not so much over a specific issue but in protest of a style of government, according to sources close to the military who requested anonymity.

Since Iraq took over Kuwait in August, Ozal has been running the show, often bypassing cabinet members and the Foreign Ministry.

A few days after the Aug. 2 invasion, the foreign minister heard from reporters that twin pipelines pumping Iraqi crude through this country were being closed to comply with a U.N. embargo against Iraq.

Foreign Minister Ali Bozer resigned in October, followed the next month by Defence Minister Safa Giray.

The general fear is that for U.S. favours, which may not even materialise, Turkey may drift into a Mideast war under Ozal's daredevil leadership.

"Who else but Bush still supports Ozal's style of gov-

ernment?" asked columnist Turgut Altan in the independent daily Gunes Tuesday. "Could a nation of 50 million be pushed into war behind the United States just because Ozal wants it when everyone, from 15-year-olds to the chief of staff, is opposed to war?"

Ozal was elected premier in 1983 when the military turned over power to civilians in general elections.

He won reelection in 1987, but his party was badly beaten in local elections two years later.

The parliament, where the Motherland Party he founded enjoys a large majority, elected him president last year in a ballot boycotted by the opposition. Ozal moved to the Cankaya Palace and turned over the premiership to Yildirim Akbulut, a loyal follower and inexperienced politician.

Opponents have two major objections: Ozal had himself elected president when polls showed about 20 per cent voter support for him. After his election, he started running the government from behind-the-scenes although the presidency is a mainly ceremonial post with little executive power.

Opposition politicians have refused to attend national day and new year receptions given by Ozal.

They say they will change the constitution to unseat Ozal if they have enough votes after the next general elections scheduled for 1992. Ozal's seven-year term expires in 1995.

Other sectors of the society are on the march to protest various domestic policies.

In a meeting Tuesday on national productivity, labour representatives marched out in protest when Ozal walked into the meeting hall.

Forty-eight thousand mine workers are on strike and hundreds of them along the Black Sea coast hold daily rallies to lambast the government for insisting on low wages at a time of high inflation.

Businessmen, who were once natural allies of Ozal and supporters of his free market policies, are grumbling about widespread corruption in government ranks and lack of coordination in economic policies.

The educated elite and other secularist Turks are demanding an end to government policies and hiring practices deemed favourable to Islamic fundamentalists.

Torumtay's resignation also signalled the military's growing discomfort with the religious groups, analysts say.

The Motherland Party has pushed through legislation lifting the ban on Islamic head-covering for university women. In many government offices, Friday prayers are virtually mandatory if one wants to keep his job.

In the past month, hundreds of university professors have marched to the mausoleum of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the 67-year-old republic and architect of Westernising reforms, to protest the growing power of fundamentalists.

Professors at the three medical schools in this capital city did not show up for classes one day to signal their opposition to the spread of Islamic beliefs in those scientific quarters.

Electricity generation in Jordan touches all corners of society

By Nur Sati

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan has come a long way since the 1930's when electricity generation was launched in Amman with small diesel engines with a total capacity of 50 (mw). Now, 96 per cent of the population enjoys electricity.

While the remaining four per cent represents remote and sparsely populated villages where it is uneconomical to extend the national network.

This is where the photovoltaic section at the renewable energy centre of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) steps in. Although solar turbines constitute a very minimal percentage of the national output RSS specialists assert that there is great potential of solar energy in Jordan.

"The annual daily average of solar radiation on a horizontal plane in Jordan is estimated to be 5.35 kwh/square metres a day," Ismail Nabhan, research engineer of the photovoltaic section said, adding that the average solar radiation intensity during winter seasons is about 3 kwh/square metres a day and exceeds 6 kwh/square metres a day in the remaining period of the year.

Because Jordan has such a high average of sunlight a year, it is possible to economically improve the conditions of these remote areas, specifically clinics, schools, churches and mosques as well as houses, Nabhan explained. In 1986, the RSS installed nine solar radiation measuring stations in various different areas climatically representing the whole country.

From the experiments that were conducted in those areas, the RSS engineers constructed a map for the distribution of solar radiation in Jordan. "The eastern and southern parts of the country, which are considered as remote areas from the national grid, showed that they had higher annual averages of daily solar radiation intensity and so we concluded that technically and economically, it was feasible to cover the basic electric energy needs in such remote areas by using photovoltaic generators," Nabhan explained.

Photovoltaic is the process in

which two dissimilar materials pressed into tight contact act as an electric cell when struck by light or other radiant energy. If the free ends of the two materials are connected by a wire, an electric current flows, which can be used to measure the brightness of the incident light or to power an electrical circuit.

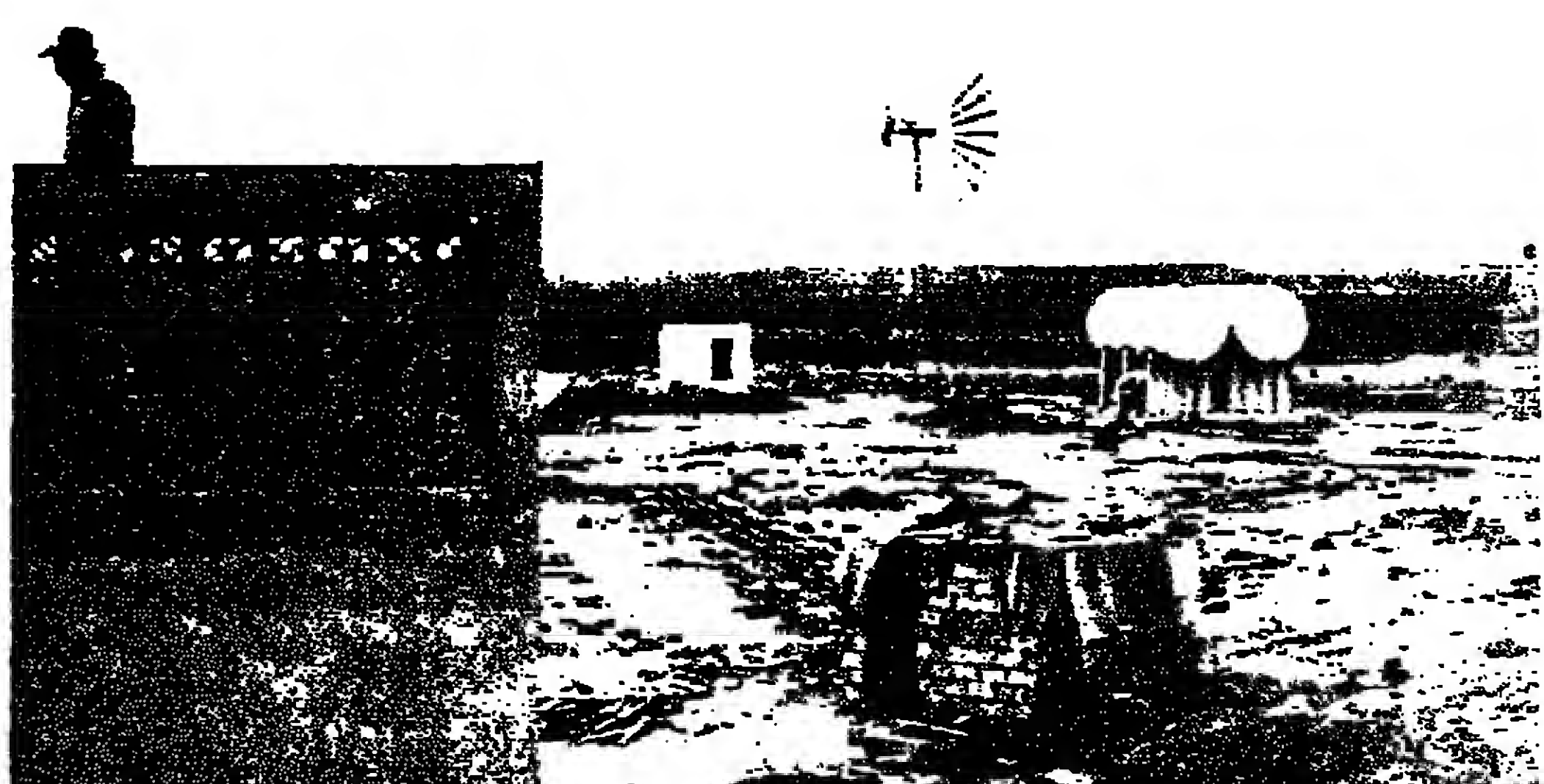
According to Nabhan, the photovoltaic project was first targeted to four villages. These include Rahmeh, consisting of a population of 1,500, two schools and one clinic, Al-Reeshah with a total of 700 inhabitants, two schools and a clinic, Beer Mathkour, which has 500 as the total population, a school and a clinic, and the fourth village, known as Al-Gregra with 1000 people as well as one school and one clinic.

He explained that the most important basic needs of the inhabitants were found to be in the electrification of clinics such as refrigerators for medicine and vaccines, lights and communication. Electrification of the mosques, lighting up the assembly halls as well as a need for educational television and the electrification of teachers' residences.

"We began the first phase of the electrification process in 1986 where a number of street lights, room lamps, educational televisions and refrigerators were installed," Nabhan said. "Very soon, we will start with the next phase which consists of solar home systems," he added.

Many experts at the RSS have been giving the photovoltaic technology a lot of consideration. Since the weather conditions are suitable for such a project, many tests have been carried out. The RSS in cooperation with the European Economic Community (EEC) has set up an experimental research and development project at the energy research station in Aqaba, for testing and studying the performance of the photovoltaic cells, their properties and characteristics under the Jordanian weather conditions, according to specialists.

Nabhan affirmed that many photovoltaic projects in different fields have been accomplished since 1982. "The main purpose of these projects is to



A joint Jordanian-Iraqi scientific and technological cooperation project in the field of solar and wind energy to exploit renewable energy in developing remote and desert areas.

demonstrate the technical and economical feasibility under the prevailing weather conditions."

One of the most successful applications of the photovoltaic systems, Nabhan continued, is the pumping of water in remote and isolated areas. "Six photovoltaic systems replaced the diesel generators in 1985," he said. Already this system is installed in Al-Umari, Al-Jafer, Al-Hazeem, Hrahmeh and Al-Showmari.

What seems to be unique qualities of the photovoltaic system is that the reliability and availability of the systems are much higher than diesel, especially in those areas where the annual average of solar radiation exceeds 4.5 kwh/square metres. Nabhan explained that it is also cost effective. "Where the use of diesel generators cost \$1.45 per cent kwh, the cost of the photovoltaic system was \$0.43." He added that the maintenance cost needed for the system is four per cent of that needed for the diesel generator systems.

Environmentalists expressed their hope in the photovoltaic system because, they said, "it is air pollution free and noise-

less."

Another project that was launched in the beginning of September, 1989, was a joint Jordanian-Iraqi scientific and technological cooperation project in the field of solar and wind energy to exploit renewable energy in developing remote and desert areas, according to Dr. Ahmad Muheidat, researcher in the photovoltaic department.

The \$750,000 testing system, which includes the construction of two research stations on the Jordanian-Iraqi border with an area of 205 square metres each, is scheduled to be completed by 1991. "The stations use passive design and consist of thermal insulation to suit solar energy applications," Muheidat said.

The project aims at building up Arab self-sufficiency in the field of utilising renewable energy as well as studying the possibility of supplying two remote areas in Jordan and Iraq respectively with their requirements of renewable energy sources. "This would improve the social and economical standards of people living there, preserve the animal and agricultural wealth and limit the immigration flow into the cities

and possibly enhance the reverse immigration into these remote areas," Muheidat asserted.

Each project contains a photovoltaic electricity generating system to supply the laboratory and agricultural equipment, a photovoltaic pumping system to secure the 40 metres cubed daily water demand, a mechanical windmill water pumping system, an air conditioning system and an under floor heating system. Muheidat affirmed that a Fudum farm has also been founded in the Jordanian side. "The farm is cultivated with various trees to study the suitability of these areas for agriculture," he added.

Although the photovoltaic system is relatively new in the Kingdom, it is proving to be a successful project and could very well reduce the country's fuel consumption, while at the same time enhancing Jordan's self reliance capabilities and providing distant villages with better health services, higher attachment to education and an extension to the regular working day, through the utilisation of this light, according to specialists.

Massive curfew on intifada anniversary

(Continued from page 1)

the other 14 members of the council, diplomats said.

Malaysian Ambassador Ismail Razali said, "we've gone a long way with this and if there is no common agreement tomorrow (Friday) there should be a vote."

Other diplomats, however, thought the negotiations might take longer. The debate was expected to start 2100 GMT.

The United States is anxious not to veto the resolution, fearing the effect on the Arab alliance it has fashioned to counter Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

But Washington is reluctant to endorse provisions that Israel

would be likely to reject.

The revised draft is based on the non-aligned resolution sponsored by Colombia, Cuba, Malaysia and Yemen, and a softer U.S. working paper.

One paragraph of the draft, referring to the convening "at an appropriate time of an international peace conference on the Middle East, properly structured," raised speculation on Thursday about a switch in U.S. policy because it had not been contained previously in a council resolution.

American officials insisted this wording reflected long-standing

U.S. policy.

Another element in the draft referred to Washington welcomes the idea of a meeting of the signatories of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the treatment of civilians in time of war to discuss ways of protecting the Palestinians.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) would be asked to invite the signatories to discuss possible measures to be taken at such a meeting.

The General Assembly Thursday adopted five resolutions con-

demning Israeli policies in the occupied territories and promoting U.N. activities in support of the Palestinians.

All the resolutions were similar to those passed in previous years. Israel and the United States were alone in casting negative votes against each.

General Assembly resolutions compared to those in the Security Council are non-binding but reflect positions of the international community.

One assembly resolution, adopted by a vote of 141 to two with three abstentions, condemns Israeli policies and practices in

the occupied territories.

Another one, passed 144 to two, calls for an international peace conference on the Middle East and asks the Security Council to consider establishing a preparatory committee for such a conference.

Three others drew abstentions from Western European nations, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

They supported the work of the U.N. Palestine rights committee, the U.N. secretariat's division for Palestine rights and requested the U.N. department of public information to disseminate information on the question of Palestine.

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U.S. said likely to offer Soviets export credits soon

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. lawmakers and grain trade officials said on Thursday President George Bush will probably extend at least a billion dollars in export credits soon to the cash-strapped Soviet Union for imports of American grain.

They said they expect a favourable decision between now and next week because of relentless pressure from the powerful American farm lobby and new-found support from Jewish groups.

Officially, the White House has not given any indication on whether it will grant the export credits, but Republican Senator Bob Dole said: "It looks very promising."

"I have taken the credit case directly to the president and I am encouraged by the feedback I am getting — it's definitely on track," said Dole, the Senate's minority leader.

If the credits are granted, they would be worth slightly more than \$1 billion, a senior Agriculture Department official said this week at a congressional hearing.

Paul Dickerson, the Agriculture Department's sales manager, said he expected the credits to equal the amount received by Mexico, the biggest recipient of U.S. farm credit at about \$1.25 billion annually.

Bush is expected to decide on the matter after his return from a Latin American tour this weekend. Lawmakers and the farm trade expect a favourable Bush decision on credit to be ready in time for a summit between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and his Soviet counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze in Houston, Texas, Dec. 10-11.

Optimism on the credits issue has increased ever since Bush hinted last week he may drop his

long-standing demand that Moscow allow freer Soviet Jewish emigration.

He had held previously that provisions in the trade act of 1974 prevented him from extending economic concessions to Moscow unless it liberalised emigration laws.

Some analysts expect Bush to waive the provisions of the law for at least a year, during which time, Moscow's record on emigration would be closely watched.

Bush, smarting from charges by American farmers that he had imposed a de facto grain embargo against Moscow by not giving credits, ordered his top advisers to review the issue.

The Soviet Union is in dire need of hard currency to buy grain and food items to bear acute shortages ravaging cities as a result of the crumbling distribution

system and has demanded U.S. credits to be able to import American grain of which it has been a big buyer.

Some European countries, Canada, Australia and Japan have responded by giving multimillion-dollar financial assistance.

American Jewish groups, who maintain a strong political lobby, had opposed economic concessions to Moscow because of concern over Soviet Jewish emigration.

Members of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry meeting this week recommended to the Bush administration that the restrictions be waived.

The recommendation was made because of the emergency Soviet situation and because of a record number of emigrants, said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Colombia seeks higher coffee prices

LONDON (R) — Colombia, the world's second largest coffee producer, is calling for a new International Coffee Organisation (ICO) pact to boost prices by curbing the flood of exports hitting the market.

Delegates said Colombia raised the question of a return to a coffee agreement with economic clauses "unexpectedly early but effectively" on the first day of an ICO executive board meeting Thursday.

"During a discussion of documents dealing with the current market situation presented by the ICO secretariat, Colombia said that we should seek negotiation of an economic agreement in order to have a regulation of the market," Rene Montes, chairman of the executive board, told Reuters.

"The Colombian position was that the market situation was currently deplorable, prices were too low, and that the amount of coffee exported was beyond the market reality," he said.

The current coffee agreement is purely an administrative pact following the collapse of export quotas in July 1989. This was because members could not agree on how to share the market among producers.

Figures presented to the executive board Thursday showed that export revenues totalled \$6.5 billion in the year ending September compared with \$9 billion in the corresponding period in 1988-89 and \$13 billion in more favourable times, delegates said.

Montes stressed that Thursday's talks did not mean negotiations towards a pact with economic clauses had begun.

"During consultations, we can only find the basis for negotiation," he said.

At a full ICO council meeting in September, the 50 exporting and 22 importing members agreed to a proposal by the world's largest coffee producer, Brazil, that the administrative pact be extended for one year until September 1992.

This was despite calls for a more committed approach from Colombia and from African producers.

Colombia also asked Brazil to reconsider its position towards a new agreement, they said.

Brazil proposed the pact extension in order to allow more time for consultations at home.

"We too are alarmed by the very serious deterioration in export revenues. I recognise that this was a genuine call for Brazil to negotiate, but our stance has not changed," Brazil's London-based minister-counsellor Valdemar Carneiro Leao said.

GATT talks suspended

BRUSSELS (R) — The troubled GATT trade talks were suspended Friday when a trans-Atlantic row over farm subsidies paralysed a four-year attempt to lift barriers on a trillion dollars of commerce.

A week-long ministerial session of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which was supposed to approve the most ambitious free trade pact ever, was deadlocked by the subsidy row pitting the European Community against the United States.

Anxious to quell fears that the breakdown might herald a new era of protectionism such as that which accompanied the 1930s world slump, delegates agreed to meet again early next year to try to conclude the Uruguay round of trade liberalisation.

"The Brussels meeting is dead, but long live the Uruguay round," said Neal Blewett, trade minister of Australia, one of several farming nations bitterly disappointed at the breakdown.

The adjournment brought to a halt work by the Geneva-based trade watchdog to free trade in 15 sectors from patents to banking. Framework accords on these sectors had been laboriously etched since the round was launched in Uruguay in 1986.

Delegates hastened to limit any damage that the work of GATT, a visible advertisement for free trade, might suffer at the very moment when the West is championing free enterprise as the key to change from Moscow to Managua.

They pointed out that the talks had been suspended, not abandoned, although most used the words "breakdown" or "collapse" to describe the end of the Brussels session.

"I am disappointed, very, very disappointed," said Carla Hills, U.S. trade representative.

She said negotiations would not resume unless conditions were right and said that would depend upon the EC's taking a softer line on farm trade.

"I hope these conditions will become apparent soon. There is no guarantee they will," she told a news conference.

The gulf between the EC and the United States appeared vast, delegates said, and it remained to be seen whether the two trading giants could move closer in the weeks before experts resume their work in Geneva early next year.

Washington, anxious to prise open markets in many sectors by offering concessions in agriculture, agreed to cut internal farm

subsidies by 75 per cent and export subsidies by 90 per cent.

Other farming nations fell behind the U.S. stance, sensing that, if approved, it would put them on better footing to compete against the EC in everything from grains to meat.

But Brussels, anxious to protect its common agricultural policy and the 10 million farmers it shelters, offered only to cut internal support by 30 per cent.

It said agriculture could not be treated alone and had to be negotiated as part of the overall package. But the rest of the 107 participating nations said that without progress on farming, nothing else could be negotiated.

The U.S. sneered at the EC position. "This is a mouse of the lowest common denominator," said one American negotiator.

EC negotiators accused Washington of inflexibility. "We are prepared to discuss and negotiate and continue with any dialogue with any parties today, tomorrow, to the end of the weekend," said EC farm commissioner Ray MacSharry.

But Washington said it was the EC that would not shift. "It's not the U.S. which has to move, it is the European Community," said U.S. deputy trade representative Julius Katz.

Anti-mafia bank could open can of worms

By Stephen Addison
Reuters

ROME — A plan to curb mafia influence by lifting the veil of secrecy from ordinary Italians' bank accounts has threatened to expose a far more dangerous enemy of the state — the tax dodger.

But far from handing the government a big revenue bonanza, any such move may only cause grave damage to the banking sector, some analysts are starting to believe.

They fear the millions of self-employed Italians thought to evade taxes may take flight and simply remove their money from the banks rather than risk being exposed by tax authorities.

In a country where people save more than anywhere else except Japan, it could also harm efforts to contain a large and chronic budget deficit.

"There's probably some

truth in it," said economist Paolo-Filippo Lardera of London brokers Phillips and Drew. "People might well start taking their money abroad."

The plan to allow the government to examine bank accounts without a warrant was proposed last month by the powerful employers' organisation, Confindustria, a previous opponent of the idea.

The situation is now grave enough to merit more automatic verification of bank accounts," said Confindustria President Sergio Pininfarina, referring to a big upsurge in mafia activity this year. "This could also help in the battle against tax evasion."

The proposal, aimed at stopping criminals laundering stolen money by passing it through the banking system into legitimate investments, has been welcomed by Finance Minister Rino Formica and is now being considered by the

government.

All cash payments over 20 million lire (\$18,000) already have to be recorded in Italy, and European Community (EC) economic and finance ministers are currently trying to agree on a community-wide accord on money laundering.

But giving tax inspectors the right to delve into individual accounts would be a much bigger step.

"Italians are not used to a tax man who can check their portfolios," said the Milan daily Corriere Della Sera. "If it happens, they might even decide to put their money in foreign banks. It's a very delicate question."

The thrifty Italians save over 14 per cent of what they earn, just below the Japanese rate of 15 per cent but three times as much as the Americans, according to figures from the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development.

Most of it goes into buying short-term treasury bonds but over a third is held in ordinary banks.

How much of that is owed to the taxman is anybody's guess but analysts agree tax dodging in Italy is practised in truly grand proportions.

"If the authorities got what they were entitled to get in taxes, they could wipe out the budget deficit in a year," said one diplomat.

Some analysts, who cite a traditional Italian distrust of the state and a growing public feeling that taxes are being wasted on grandiose building projects in the depressed south, estimate that at least half the self-employed either dodge taxes or pay only a fraction of what they owe.

Whatever the sums at stake, they are bound to be much larger than those being laundered by the mafia.

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U.S. unemployment rate rises

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. unemployment rate rose to 5.9 per cent in November from 5.7 per cent in October, the Labour Department said Friday.

The number of new jobs outside of agriculture fell by a steep 267,000, the department said.

The unemployment rate was as expected by financial analysts but the sharp decline in the number of new jobs was much larger than forecast and added to worries that the economy is close to recession. Economists had expected non-farm payroll jobs to fall by only about 75,000.

The department also sharply raised its estimate for the number of jobs lost in October, saying payrolls outside farming were cut by 178,000 instead of the 68,000 it previously estimated.

The financial markets reacted quickly to the signs of a further weakening in the economy, sending the dollar down against other currencies. Treasury bonds rose, with traders betting the figures would help prompt the federal reserve board to push interest rates lower.

The unemployment rate has been rising steadily since June, when it was 5.2 per cent.

The jobless report gave the first comprehensive look at the economy in November and whether the downturn that began in early October continued.

Most economists believe the United States is headed for a recession if it is not already in one, and Bush administration officials say a contraction during the final three months is likely. But officials also say it is too early to declare a recession. A recession is usually defined as two quarters of declining economic activity.

White House Economic Adviser Michael Boskin said this week he thought the gross national product report for the fourth quarter would show a decline, but predicted the economy would pick up again in the second half of 1991. GNP in third quarter rose 1.7 per cent, compared with a 0.4 per cent increase in the second quarter.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan told Congress earlier this month that the economy is in a "meaningful downturn" that began in early October, but he fell short of calling it a recession.

The central bank this week decided to eliminate reserve requirements for some bank deposits, a move designed to encourage more bank lending to ease a credit crunch.

Southwest Bank of St. Louis, a regional bank that is often a bellwether on interest rate moves, cut its prime lending rate to 9.75 per cent from 10 per cent after Friday's news.

If other banks follow Southwest's lead, it will be the first change in the benchmark rate since Jan. 8. Southwest often sets the trend for changes in the prime rate, a benchmark for many consumer loans.

Economists have been expecting banks to lower their prime, noting that rates in the money markets have been falling in recent months as the federal reserve tries to stimulate an economy many now believe has fallen into a recession.

The dollar fell on the unemployment news, sliding to 1.4790 German marks, down from 1.4845 marks just before the figures were released.

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Stocks closed higher on hopes for a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis after Israel's decision to freeze all foreign aid. The Nikkei closed up 969.39 points or 4.30 per cent at 23,522.49.

SYDNEY — Shares ended the week on a high note, boosted by a surge on the Tokyo market. The All Ordinaries Index closed 12.3 points firmer at 1335.6.

HONG KONG — The Hang Seng closed 36.90 points up at 3,163.69 in a second straight day of strong gains sparked by steps towards a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis.

SINGAPORE — Institutional and individual investors made a strong comeback to push the Straits Times Index up 44.89 points, or 3.84 per cent, to close at 1,197.85.

FRANKFURT — Heightened hopes of peace in the Gulf and continued optimism over last weekend's reelection of Chancellor Helmut Kohl gave shares another life. The Dax Index rose 8.17 to 1,512.84, its fifth gain in the last six sessions.

ZURICH — Prices finished easier in moderate trading but off earlier lows as buyers returned to pick up shares cheaply. The All-Share SPI index fell 1.3 to 937.8.

PARIS — The market began modestly higher, extending Thursday's gain, after the opening was delayed by technical problems.

LONDON — Shares held steady as U.S. blue chips recovered from early losses. At 1515 GMT the FTSE Index was up 8.2 at 2,185.7.

NEW YORK — Blue chips erased early losses and moved tentatively higher morning trading, bolstered by hopes of a further easing by the Federal Reserve. The Dow was up about three at 2,606.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, November 6, 1990
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	French franc	130.5	131.3
U.S. dollar	661.0	665.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	493.2	496.2
Pound Sterling	1274.9	1282.5	Dutch guilder	391.7	394.1
Deutschemark	441.7	444.4	Swedish crown	117.6	118.3
Swiss franc	517.2	520.3	Italian lire (for 100)	58.7	59.1
			Belgian franc (for 10)	212.5	213.8

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

	One Sterling	1.9420/30	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1624/34	1.4840/47	Canadian dollar
	1.6728/38	1.2657/64	Deutschemarks
	30.72/77	5.0520/70	Dutch guilders
	1118/1119	131.65/75	Swiss francs
	5.5875/925	5.5875/925	Belgian francs
	5.8180/230	5.7090/140	French francs
	370.85/371.35		Italian lire
One ounce of gold			Japanese yen
			Swedish crowns
			Norwegian crowns
			Danish crowns
			U.S. dollars

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3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

ROOF TOPS

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **NIJOU** Tel: 675571

Kamal Al Shinnawi, Iham Shahin, Farouq Al Fishawi

IN APPOINTMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

Nadia Al Jundi & Farouq Al Fishawi

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Tenders Department
P.O. Box 132
Amman-Jordan

Tel: 21969 AM CITY JO
Fax: 9628649420

Closing date for accepting the bids is 10:00 a.m. Monday Jan. 21, 1991 at same address mentioned above.

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Bangladesh army told president to resign

Opposition seeks Ershad's trial

DHAKA (R) — Bangladeshi opposition parties demanded Friday that former President Hosain Mohammad Ershad stand trial for what one said was a reign of terror.

"Definitely he and his accomplices should be tried and punished under law of the land," said Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chief Begum Khaleda Zia. Sheikh Hasina, head of the Awami League, said those who had destroyed democracy and squandered public funds must be dealt with appropriately.

Ershad, a former general who seized power by toppling an elected government in 1982, stepped down Tuesday following a bitter and often violent campaign led by Hasina and Khaleda.

He transferred power to caretaker Vice-President Shahabuddin Ahmad Thursday. Ahmad, supreme court chief justice, will run Bangladesh until elections are held.

"Ershad must stand trial for letting loose white terror during his illegal and autocratic rule," the fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami Party said in a statement.

Ahmad said the future elected government would have to decide the issue.

"As far as I am concerned, my

job is to restore order and hold elections within three months," he said in an interview with the Voice of America radio station. "As for the rest of the matter, it is for the next government to take up."

Khaleda led her followers in a procession Friday to the tomb of her late husband, President Ziaur Rahman, who was killed in an abortive coup in 1981.

The U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh, William Milam, met Khaleda Thursday in what BNP leaders described as a courtesy call.

Hasina, daughter of Bangladesh's independence leader and first president, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, stayed at home and received friends and well-wishers, aides said.

The business of the new government, including setting up an interim cabinet, will not begin in earnest until next week, senior officials said.

Ahmad has asked opposition leaders to help choose his cabinet but the BNP has declined.

"We have said this is absolutely his job and any interference by us may hurt the neutrality of his administration," one BNP leader said.

Ahmad drove Friday to the

National Memorial for Martyrs, 25 miles (40 kilometres) from Dhaka, to lay wreaths in honour of those who died in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971.

Meanwhile Bangladesh's army chief said his men talked Ershad into resigning three days ago to avert a political catastrophe.

"We played our due role in ensuring a democratic transition at a critical juncture," Lieutenant-General Nuruddin Khan told state-run television Thursday night.

"That's why the transition was smooth and easy."

Supreme Court Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad will act as president for three months and oversee elections to the 300-member parliament.

Opposition parties have accused Ershad of running an illegal, corrupt and autocratic government with the backing of the armed forces.

Hours after taking power, Ahmad removed one of Ershad's most trusted officers, director-general of National Security Intelligence Major General Ashraf Hussain.

Officials said Ahmad would also disband the presidential security force, which Ershad created for his own protection. Eighteen officers from the force

have already been transferred into the army.

General Khan said the country would have plunged into anarchy if Ershad had not resigned, but that the army would never have staged a coup because the soldiers believed in democracy.

"They realise that the real progress of a nation is possible only under a democratic administration. We never entertained the thought of a military takeover," he said.

Joy and a profound sense of relief swept Bangladesh Friday, the day after Ershad handed over power to caretaker vice-president.

"We have never been able to enjoy democracy to its full breadth. Maybe an era is dawning when things will be different," Dhaka resident Abdul Barez told a reporter.

Barez, 65, said he would join special prayers at the capital's biggest mosque, Baitul Mokarram, to thank God for saving Bangladesh from the hands of an autocrat.

Policemen and students, who battled each other for years in anti-Ershad protests, were seen shaking hands on the city streets.

"Evermore seems to be shaping the victory," bank employee Shahadat Ullah said.

'Berlin airlift' begins to aid Soviets

BERLIN (R) — A new Berlin airlift, sending the city's food reserves to the Soviet Union which once blockaded it, began Friday when the first supplies were loaded aboard Soviet army trucks.

Three thousand tonnes of milk powder and medical supplies were to be flown to Moscow by Soviet Air Force transport planes, for delivery to citizens facing a harsh winter of shortages, as the first instalment of an aid effort rich in historical irony.

West Berlin maintained huge food reserves for almost four decades following the 1948-49 Soviet blockade, when the Western allies supplied the city by air in what became known as the Berlin airlift.

The stockpile, worth half a billion marks (\$330 million) and filling some 70,000 square metres of storage space, contains enough to feed 10 million people for a month, city official Gerhard Erbe said.

Lieutenant-Colonel Vitaly Shelezniak, commander of the 42-truck Soviet convoy, said: "We did not expect things to go so fast and we never expected the Berlin Senate (city government) to give us its reserves."

"We will do everything to ensure they reach the needy people."

The city government decided last month to donate the stock, no longer needed in a united Germany, as part of a massive private and official effort to help the Soviet Union which made unification possible.

A city official said it would take eight to 12 weeks to transport the 180,000 tonnes of food and medical supplies, plus household goods such as toilet paper, matches and washing powder, to the Soviet Union by air and sea.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev launched a televised appeal for donations last week with many German charities, newspapers and television stations joining the drive.

NATO pledges cuts in European nuclear arms

BRUSSELS (R) — NATO pledged Friday to slash its cold-war arsenal of nuclear weapons in Europe, but said the alliance would have to keep some modern nuclear forces there as a guarantee of peace.

NATO defence ministers, in a statement at the end of a two-day meeting to plan the alliance's military response to the transformation of East-West relations, said they had already begun work on this.

"The work... will lead to further dramatic reductions in the number of NATO's nuclear weapons retained in Europe," the statement said.

"We reaffirmed that, to keep the peace, the alliance must maintain... an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces, based in Europe, and kept up to date where necessary," the statement said.

U.S. short-range nuclear missiles and artillery shells, most of which are based in Germany on the former cold war front line, were expected to be cut out altogether, probably in negotiations with Moscow next year, NATO diplomats said.

The United States has already said it will not modernise these so-called "battlefield" weapons, intended for use against Soviet forces that are now withdrawing

from Eastern Europe. Eliminating them in arms talks or through unilateral withdrawals would cut NATO's stockpile of nuclear warheads in Europe, which also include aircraft bombs, by around half.

Belgian Defence Minister Guy Coombe told reporters that NATO's battlefield nuclear weapons would eventually be eliminated, since they would not be modernised.

British officials said Britain, which had previously opposed their total elimination, now shared the German position that they should be scrapped.

NATO is hoping to trade its short-range nuclear missiles and artillery shells for deep cuts in the Soviet arsenal of short-range nuclear forces (SNF), rather than withdrawing them unilaterally.

The statement said the SNF talks would include U.S. and Soviet weapons, effectively ruling out the inclusion of French and British nuclear weapons systems — something Moscow had wanted.

While the traditional threat of attack by the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact had gone, the political and economic crises in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union meant that NATO must maintain its defences, the statement added.

Non-party lawyer to head new Bulgarian government

SOFIA (R) — Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev Friday appointed Dimitar Popov, a 63-year-old lawyer with no party affiliation, to head a caretaker government that will lead the country to new elections.

Popov, currently chairman of the Sofia City Court, will replace ex-Communist Andrei Lukinov, whose Socialist government quit last week in the face of strikes and street protests over the worsening economy and continuing political paralysis.

Popov, who was vice-president of the commission that organised the country's first free elections for four decades last June, said in a statement he would seek to bring independent experts into his government.

"The country needs a strong government which must receive the support and backing of the country," he said. "It will be a government of hope, which must stop the process of decline and bring to an end all abuse of power."

The 400-member parliament voted to give Popov a week to form a cabinet, after which his appointment will be formally approved. A total of 15 deputies voted against, and 29 abstained.

Popov's appointment followed week of talks between the majority Socialists and the main opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) on a neutral caretaker government to lead the country to new elections next year.

Serbian opposition leader says Communists provoking civil war

BELGRADE (R) — A Serbian opposition leader, reacting to the killing of a member of his party, has accused the Communists of trying to spark a civil war to keep power in Yugoslavia's biggest republic.

Vuk Draskovic, head of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SRP), told a 10,000-strong rally in Belgrade to stay calm and use the ballot box as a weapon to oust the Communists Sunday in the republic's first free elections since World War II.

"They have tanks, (ex-Communist leader Josip Broz) Tito's generals and weapons in their hands, but we have voting ballots which are the bullets of democracy," Draskovic said as the crowd chanted "red fascists murderers" and anti-Communist slogans.

"The Bolsheviks wanted to spill Serbian blood because it was the only way they could retain power... (but) let's not do what

they want and start a civil war," he said.

His attack was prompted by the death of Slobodan Ivanovic, a member of the SRP and the first known fatality in the Serbian election campaign.

The Tanjug News Agency said he was shot by a Communist party member Wednesday night while putting up election posters. The Communists denied any connection with the attack.

Serbia and tiny Montenegro will Sunday be the last of Yugoslavia's six republics to hold free elections following the political upheavals in the rest of Eastern Europe. The Communists lost in Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia.

Slovenia and Croatia have been increasingly at odds with the central authorities since their elections. Both threaten to secede unless Yugoslavia becomes a looser alliance giving

them more independence.

Slovenia decided Thursday to hold an independence referendum on Dec. 23 to win public support for declaring Slovenia an independent state within Yugoslavia. Diplomats say the referendum will help ease the way to secession if necessary.

Slovene President Milan Kucan said Slovenia must push ahead with independence moves and would apply for membership of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, but said he feared the army may try to halt their independence drive.

"It has become clear that there are some circles in the army that do not want a democratic solution to the Yugoslav crisis," Kucan told the Slovene parliament.

Local residents said armed police were guarding government buildings in the Slovene capital, Ljubljana, but officials would not comment on the reports.

Thatcher receives Order of Merit

LONDON (R) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth Friday made former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher a member of the exclusive Order of Merit (OM) and her husband, Denis, a Baronet.

The OM is one of Britain's highest distinctions, but it does not mean elevation to the peerage. The former premier will continue to be addressed as Mrs.

Thatcher and retain her parliamentary seat in the House of Commons.

She told Britain's Press Association news agency: "I have done pretty well out of being Mrs. Thatcher."

Her husband will now be known as Sir Denis Thatcher. Membership of the Order of

Merit is limited to 24, plus a few foreign honorary members.

Thatcher takes the vacancy caused by the death of Lord Olivier (the actor Laurence Olivier) last year.

Other OM's include the writer Graham Greene, the violinist Sir Yehudi Menuhin and the composer Sir Michael Tippett.

Over 80 killed in week-long S. Africa violence

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South African police said Friday they had found bodies of five black men who had been shot, hacked and stabbed to death in the latest spasm of township warfare that has claimed more than 80 lives in a week.

The five were killed Thursday night in fighting in Bekkersdal township, west of Johannesburg, between supporters of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) and followers of the leftist Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO).

Earlier clashes pitted ANC supporters against those of the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party led by chief Mangosuthu Buthe.

Supporters of AZAPO, which advocates black self-reliance and rejects cooperation with whites in fighting apartheid, have been fighting supporters of the ANC for control of Bekkersdal for the past two years. Scores of people have died in the fighting.

There were no reports of clashes in other Johannesburg townships where Pretoria has sent troops and declared emergency powers to search, arrest and detain activists in a bid to quell the violence.

Meanwhile African National Congress President Oliver Tambo, a veteran of the anti-apartheid struggle, set off Thursday on the first leg of a journey back to South Africa after 30 years in exile.

"He's excited," said ANC spokesman Nad Pillay, who added that Tambo would go first to Zambia.

Burned body found in tense Indian holy city

AYODHYA, India (R) — A charred body was found Friday in the north Indian holy town of Ayodhya, which is gripped by Hindu-Muslim tension as Hindu militants press a campaign to take over the site of a mosque.

Campaign organisers were sending an additional 1,000 volunteers Friday to be arrested for trying to approach the mosque, which they want to replace with a grandiose temple, on the second day of a civil disobedience campaign.

About 1,000 volunteers were arrested Thursday and the daily number was expected to be similar throughout the campaign.

Police told reporters the body of a man in his twenties was found charred beyond recognition in Ayodhya, some 140 kilometres east of the Uttar Pradesh state capital of Lucknow and one of Hindu India's seven ancient sacred cities.

Residents told reporters the man was a Muslim.

Some said he panicked when he saw a group of chanting Hindu militants approaching and burned himself to death. Others said Hindus killed him, believing he was plotting an attack on militants.

Police refused to confirm the man was Muslim or to speculate on the circumstances of his death.

On Thursday police baton-charged about 600 Hindus who wanted to lynch a young Muslim they said had stabbed a Sadhu, one of the Hindu mendicant holy men who roam Ayodhya's 3,000 temples.

Officials said the trouble started when someone in the crowd identified the youth as a Muslim.

He denied this, giving a false Hindu name, and there was a scuffle in which the Sadhu was slightly injured, the officials said. Police took that youth into custody.

On Friday journalists saw four looted and gutted Muslim shops and a burned-out bus in Ayodhya, where the vast majority of the 50,000 residents are Hindu.

For the second day the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the World Hindu Organisation, sent volunteers from all over India in small groups to offer themselves for arrest at the mosque site.

The VHP says Muslim invaders razed a temple on the birthplace of Lord Rama, a god-king high in the Hindu pantheon, to build the mosque in 1520. Muslims say it was built on a vacant plot.

Hirohito opposed Pearl Harbour raid — documents

TOKYO (R) — Japan's late Emperor Hirohito was afraid of losing power in a coup if he opposed the attack on the U.S. fleet in the Hawaiian Island 49 years ago, according to the diary of an aide.

The aide's daughter, Mariko Terasaki Miller, said Friday in a speech on the anniversary of the Pearl Harbour attack that documents left behind by her father cast light on the most controversial aspect of Hirohito's reign: whether he could have prevented Japan's entry into World War II.

Whether Hirohito was largely a figurehead or actively influenced policy has been the subject of much debate.

"The emperor's personal fear was that if he attempted to block the militarists (and their plan to bomb Pearl Harbour), he would have lost power and there would have been a coup d'etat," Miller said.

Miller said she recently discovered the documents of her father, Hidenari Terasaki, who served as the emperor's interpreter when he met U.S. General Douglas MacArthur after Japan's defeat in 1945.

Between March and April 1946, Hirohito summoned Terasaki and four other aides to give his account of events prior to and during World War II. Terasaki recorded details of the meetings.

Hirohito's war responsibility has rarely been discussed in a country where the subject remains a taboo.

Last January a rightist shot Nagasaki City Mayor Hitoshi Motoshima, who had voiced the view of many Japanese that the

emperor bore some responsibility for the war that led to the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Hirohito, who died in January 1989, was worshipped as a divine ruler until the end of the Pacific War. Japan's imperial armies marched into China, Korea and South East Asia in the name of the emperor.

But Hirohito told Terasaki he had never considered himself a god.

"I do not remember who it was but they called me a god. So I told them I was not a god for the structure of my body was the same as an ordinary human being," the aide quoted Hirohito as saying.

Bungei Shunju, a respected monthly journal, carried the text of Terasaki's documents in its December issue and a book will be published next March, said Miller.

"My father kept the records for a reason... to help us understand what the feelings (of the emperor) were at the time," she said.

Some scholars challenge the account, which they note was recorded well after the actual events.

History Professor Ikuhiko Hata said Terasaki's documents do not disclose Hirohito's real intentions during the militaristic years, when he was often seen proudly riding a white horse and reviewing troops.

"The entire account (of the emperor) comes across as self-defensive," he said in an article contributed to the Shukan Asahi weekly journal.

Shuttle computer failures halt celestial observations

HOUSTON (R) — Computer failures on the U.S. shuttle Columbia and on the ground has halted most celestial observation, the latest in a series of setbacks that have plagued the shuttle programme.

A computer used by the Columbia astronauts to determine where their on-board telescopes were pointing had to be turned off when the "scent of something hot" filled the flight deck, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said.

NASA said an on-board device had detected a build-up of carbon monoxide in the cabin, but later said the detector had malfunctioned.

Ground-based astronomers were forced to use voice commands to aim telescopes in a \$148-million, 15-tonne observatory carried in the shuttle's cargo bay.

Flight controllers radioed specific instructions up to the seven-

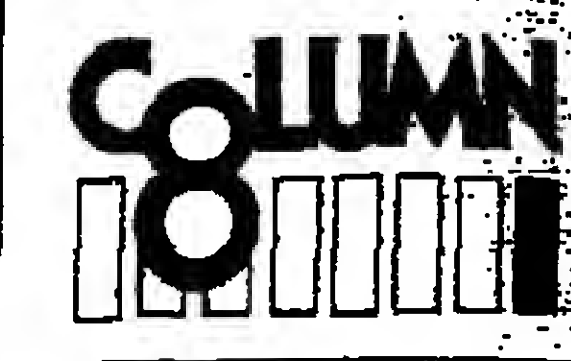
man crew, which in turn operated a joystick to manoeuvre the telescopes.

A communications computer at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico also failed, cutting off all communications for about 30 minutes before back-up systems were successfully activated.

Columbia, which Sunday lifted off and was free of the fuel leaks that had disabled it for six months, was seen as a dramatic comeback for NASA.

This year saw more problems than any since 1986, with all three of the NASA shuttles grounded at one point and cancellations and delays more frequent than launches.

Communications links during the present mission have collapsed occasionally, a manoeuvring jet halted observations, and a teletype system stopped working while ground crews were trying to transmit written instructions.



Todd Bridges sued for divorce

LOS ANGELES (R) — Former U.S. child star Todd Bridges, who played in the long-running hit television series "Diff'rent Strokes," was sued for divorce.

The petition, filed in Los Angeles Superior Court by his wife Rebecca, cited irreconcilable differences.

The couple were married a year ago and separated last Saturday, according to Rebecca Bridges' court submission, which seeks unspecified support from her husband. There are no children.

The divorce suit is the latest setback for the 25-year-old actor, an admitted former cocaine addict who starred with Gary Coleman in "Diff'rent Strokes," one of the most popular television shows in America during its run from 1978 to 1986. Bridges spent nine months in jail last year before being found not guilty of murdering a drug dealer in a Los Angeles cocaine crack house. He has since spent time lecturing students on the dangers of drugs and recently signed a contract to act in a new Lassie television show.

His former co-star Coleman, 22, was released from an Arizona clinic after treatment for a recurring kidney ailment, his spokesman said. Publicist Michael Gerety said the diminutive actor, who is just over four feet (123 centimetres) tall, was feeling very well. Coleman has already had two kidney transplants.

Pop duo accused of infringing copyright in lawsuit

NEW YORK (R) — The disgraced pop duo Milli Vanilli were accused in a \$120-million lawsuit of infringing the copyright on the 1968 rock song Spinning Wheel. That lawsuit was filed by David Clayton-Thomas of the 1960s rock band Blood, Sweat and Tears, who owns the rights to the song. Clayton-Thomas alleged in the lawsuit that the rights were appropriated by Milli Vanilli members Rob Pilatus and Fabrice Morvan in their hit album Gili You Know It's True. Pilatus and Morvan last month were forced to return Grammy Awards after it was disclosed they had not actually sung on their album and pretended to sing in performances.

The song cited in the lawsuit, All Or Nothing, has a musical theme identical to that on Spinning Wheel but different lyrics. It is on the Milli Vanilli album produced by Frank Farian of Berlin after negotiations with EMI, Clayton-Thomas' representative. Farian and EMI are also named as defendants in the lawsuit.

EMI had acquired rights to Spinning Wheel and was required to collect 42 per cent of the royalty fees for the author. Instead the suit claims EMI last year negotiated a contract with Farian reducing Clayton-Thomas' share to only 12.5 per cent without his knowledge. The lawsuit seeks \$120 million in actual and punitive damages.

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Earth rotation has slowed by tiny fraction

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Scientists, using records of solar eclipses scratched by ancient Chinese on the shoulder blades of oxen, have determined that the Earth's rotation has slowed by tiny fractions of a second over the past 3,200 years. Kevin Pang, an astronomer at the U.S. space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, said Tuesday that an Earth Day was 47-thousandths of a second shorter in 1200 B.C. Pang and his colleagues, using bones on which records were kept some 1,000 years before the invention of paper, determined precisely where five solar eclipses were seen and where the moon's shadow fell in Anyang, China, in the years between 1226 B.C. and 1161 B.C. According to a paper presented at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union, the scientists — working with computers — then looked back at the orbits of Earth and the moon. They said they determined within seconds when the two bodies were lined up with the sun for a solar eclipse. They then calculated the rate at which they had to rewind the Earth's spin backward in time to dates in ancient China when the moon's shadow would fall over Anyang. Scientists say the Earth's spin has been slowed by the frictional braking caused by tides.

While the separatists seeking an independent Slovakia are a small minority, many Slovaks harbour suspicions toward the 600,000 ethnic Hungarians in their country. Hungarians subjugated the Slovaks for more than 1,000 years.

In Yugoslavia, ethnic tensions among different nationalities have been fired by the establishment of democratically elected non-Communist governments in Slovenia and Croatia.

While the two republics strive for greater independence, their policies are rejected by the Communist leadership in Serbia.

Serbia's leaders also revoked the regional autonomy of its Kosovo province, where ethnic Albanians are a 85 per cent majority.

Albanians want autonomy restored and have launched bloody clashes against security. Many young Albanian nationalists would like to see a Yugoslav Republic of Kosovo, but few want union with neighbouring Albania.

Serbia is scheduled to hold its first free elections, but whatever the outcome, the ethnic conflict with the Western republics is unlikely to die down.